

SWEDENBORG'S WRITINGS

AND

CATHOLIC TEACHING.

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SWEDENBORG'S WRITINGS

AND

CATHOLIC TEACHING;

OR,

A VOICE FROM THE NEW CHURCH PORCH,

IN ANSWER TO

A SERIES OF ARTICLES ON THAT SUBJECT BY THE VICAR OF
FROME-SELWOOD.

“Vox Clamantis in deserto . . .”—*Isaiah* xl. 3.

THIRD EDITION.

BY

THE REV. AUGUSTUS CLISSOLD, M.A.

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PREFACE TO THE THIRD EDITION.

WERE this a controversy affecting only individual opinions, it might well rank with others of a similar character; but as it is one which involves questions concerning the permanence of the present Dispensation, concerning the actual spiritual condition of the Catholic Church, concerning the Lord's Divine Providence in regard to the Church, and the formation of a right judgment upon these subjects, so it evidently involves momentous questions concerning Catholic progress and the Church of the Future.

The numerous Societies which have been formed for the purpose of effecting the Reunion of Christendom are at once an evidence of the importance of the subject, and of the dissatisfaction which prevails with regard to the present broken unity of the Church. It is evident that some great principle of restoration is everywhere becoming an object of increasing interest and enquiry.

The relation of Swedenborg's Writings to the state of Christendom in the century in which they appeared, and which was that of the French Revolution, is in general

entirely unknown; and indeed involves a history which has yet to be written. That terrible period had, according to Swedenborg, a direct relation to the close of the present Dispensation, and inaugurated a New Era: it has, however, come to be almost ignored in the history of the Church, evidently from its place in the spiritual history of the Church not having as yet been duly recognized.

Speaking of the French Revolution, De Tocqueville describes* it as at the time—

“So monstrous and incomprehensible, that the human mind was lost in amazement at the spectacle. Some believed that this unknown power, which nothing seemed to foster or destroy, which no one was able to check, and which could not check itself, must drive all human society to its final and complete dissolution. Many looked upon it as the visible action of the devil upon the earth. ‘The French Revolution has a Satanic character,’ says M. De Maistre, as early as 1797. Others, on the contrary, perceived in it a beneficent design of Providence to change the face not only of France but of the world, and to create, as it were, a New Era of mankind.”

Surely, under these circumstances it is no unreasonable persuasion, that, according to some, we *may* be living in the latter times; according to others, that we *are* close upon the end of the present Dispensation; and according to others, that a New Era has *already* begun; so that both in science and theology old things are already

* *State of Society in France during the Revolution of 1789*, p. 6.

passing away and all things are becoming new. It must however be owned, that there is yet another class remaining to be noticed, who, in consequence of conflicting interpretations of Prophecy, come to the conclusion that no one knows anything of the subject; that Prophecy belongs not to the present, but to some unknown future, and hence that all interpretations of it, particularly in regard to a change of Dispensation, are matters of mere speculation, if not of idle curiosity. The consequence is, that among those who hold opinions of this kind, the annual celebration of the season of Advent becomes little better than a lifeless formality, as having relation to something into which it is futile or presumptuous to enquire; the effect of which is that the Church more and more tends to sink into that state in which, like the Jewish, it is unable to discern the signs of its approaching visitation. In the meantime, Prophecy is not the less fulfilled because the watchmen of Zion do not perceive the fulfilment. The warning, however, given by Swedenborg, more than a century ago, seems now at last beginning to find an echo in more than one quarter; as for example, according to a recent announcement by a Clergyman of the Church of England:—

“I* suppose there are few,” says he, “who think at all, who do not feel that these are days of grave anxiety. Men’s hearts are failing them for fear, and for looking

* *Sermon before the Corporation of Reading*, by the Rev. N. T. Garry, Vicar of St. Mary’s Church. *Guardian*, December 29, 1880.

after those things which are coming on the earth ; the very powers of heaven are being shaken. Things that we thought so lasting and so secure, are already beginning to totter.”

The life and death struggles of mind which have taken place among so many persons, particularly the Clergy, in regard to Creeds and Churches, bear testimony to this view of the subject, and are only the same kind of events which inevitably accompany the close of a Dispensation. But the ending of an Old Dispensation and the inauguration of one that is New, naturally produces a conflict between the Old and the New, not only in regard to the external affairs of nations, but in regard to the internal state of the Church ; and this is now the conflict between Swedenborg's Writings and Catholic Teaching.

The respected Vicar of Frome, who is the Editor of *The Old Church Porch*, undertakes the defence of what he calls Catholic Teaching ; and the Reviewer in the *Church Times*, when noticing a work by the present author on *The Consummation of the Age* (September 3, 1880), remarks, that “the pages of *The Old Church Porch*, a book familiar to most of our readers, contain so complete an exposure and refutation of the heresies of Swedenborg, that it is unnecessary to allude to them here,” etc. The Vicar's book, it seems, is commended especially to the Clergy, as a trustworthy guide to the formation of a right judgment with regard to Swedenborg's doctrines, which, accordingly, its Editor undertakes to explain ; and

had he faithfully executed his task he would have deserved our thanks, and there would have been no need of the ensuing pages. But the course systematically pursued by the Editor is first thoroughly to misrepresent the doctrines of Swedenborg, and then to refute and expose the misrepresentation; in all which cases the genuine doctrines of Swedenborg are left untouched, and remain as unknown to the reader as before: all that is exposed and refuted being the Editor's own imaginations. Among other charges of heresy, for instance, he represents Swedenborg as denying that there is any Son of God at all, p. 227; as denying the Incarnation, p. 235; as asserting that in Christ there are two persons, p. 230; as virtually denying the necessity of the Atonement, p. 236; as denying all merit to Christ, and imputing it to man, p. 247; as denying the doctrine of Redemption by Blood, p. 249; as asserting that the first three chapters of Genesis have no authority, p. 274;—all these charges being deliberately made without any attempt at verification by direct reference to any one passage in Swedenborg's own writings; the only show of evidence being what the Editor says that another author says that Swedenborg says; and it is in this way, by the help of occasional inferences, that he comes to his own conclusions. The Editor is of course at liberty to criticise, as severely as he thinks proper, the statements of "Swedenborgian" writers, and to point out their errors wherever he thinks he can do so; but in so doing he has read his own confused ideas into

the alleged statements of Swedenborg, and the consequence is, such a complete transformation of his doctrines as, on points the most vital, to make him say the diametrically opposite to what he does say,—a process by no means calculated to magnify the office of pastoral teaching, as it is only a case of the “blind leading the blind.”

The most charitable construction is, that the zealous critic can never have read the Works of Swedenborg at all; the whole of his information on the subject being borrowed at second hand from other authors, whose meaning, it is to be hoped, he would not have so misapprehended had he read, as it was his bounden duty to do, the original writings themselves. Let it therefore be distinctly understood, that in explaining the doctrines of Swedenborg on the present occasion, we appeal directly to Swedenborg’s own writings, so as to allow him to speak for himself. But even in this case, the present Work will have failed to produce its desired effect, unless it induces the reader also to consult the original author.

The primary cause of all the misrepresentation to which we have alluded, is to be traced mainly to that defect in theological preparation, in virtue of which deacons may enter into priest’s orders, and be entrusted with the office of “banishing and driving away all erroneous and strange doctrines”—frequently without in the least knowing, or even being expected to know, what those doctrines really are. Had only the single work on *The True Christian*

Religion been read with ordinary care by the Editor or the Reviewer, we might have been spared these observations. Indeed, if it be the case that we have at last arrived at the Consummation of the Age, and that refining fires have already begun within the Catholic Church to awaken it to a sense of its true position, to purify it from evil and error, and to prepare it for a higher order of spiritual life and discernment than it has hitherto dreamed of, no priest will be adequate to the discharge of his sacred functions in the Church of the Future without having studied the relation that subsists between the *Ecclesia docens* upon earth and the *Ecclesia docens* in heaven, as presented in the *True Christian Religion*; and being led to perceive, that to falsify the statements in that Work, however unintentionally, is not to refute them, but to do a grievous wrong against Divine Truth itself.

As only a sense of duty has induced the present Author to publish the ensuing remarks, the words of St. Augustine are not unsuitable—

“Jam pudet me ista refellere, cum eos non puduit ista sentire.”

In entitling his articles—“*Swedenborgians*,” the Editor has made a mistake, as it is a title we disclaim as much as Catholics do that of *Athasians*; and though we have occasionally used the term, it is not as a term adopted by ourselves but by our opponent. The writings of Swedenborg throughout treat of subjects which concern the whole Christian Church. Their primary purpose is to

usher in the New Dispensation, in fulfilment of prophecy, and to teach, from the Word of God, genuine spiritual truth, which in due time is to take the place of the errors and falsities of the prevailing Theology. Moreover, with respect to the term *Catholic*, while the title *Christian* is used to apply to the teaching of Christ, that of *Catholic* is applied in general to the teaching of the Church; as if *Christian* and *Catholic* were not always synonymous, and one term implied sometimes what the other did not. It must be owned, however, that allowing for the freedom of discussion, the Vicar of Frome, in his articles on "*The Swedenborgians*," has, with certain exceptions, shewn, as regards tone and temper, how the two terms may coincide.

The references in this Third Edition are to the Vicar's last work on *The Swedenborgians*, chiefly reprinted from the *Old Church Porch*. Some *errata* in our former Editions have been corrected; one or two brief statements omitted, and such considerable additions made as to give to the present Edition the character almost of a new work.

The Author cannot conclude without expressing his best thanks to the Rev. Thomas Murray Gorman for his kind assistance in the supervision of the ensuing pages as they passed through the press.

TUNBRIDGE WELLS,

April, 1881.

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SWEDENBORG'S WRITINGS

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CATHOLIC TEACHING.

WHAT is the relation of the Theological Writings of Swedenborg to the doctrines of the Catholic Church? This question the Vicar of Frome has undertaken to answer, in a periodical entitled *The Old Church Porch* (of which he is the reputed Editor), in a series of articles on *The Church's Broken Unity*, and under the head of "The Swedenborgians; or, the Church of the New Jerusalem." In the course of the investigation we find set before us examples of Catholic teaching on the one side, and of the teaching of Swedenborg on the other; so that we are presented with the contrast between the two, not by a "Swedenborgian," but by one who is known and respected as a priest of the Catholic Church. The investigation is conducted in a spirit of Christian courtesy, and manifestly with a desire of doing justice to the personal character and literary qualifications of Swedenborg; of both of which, much to the credit of the writer, he speaks in the most honourable manner, admitting that he was "a man more eminent, perhaps, than any other in the acquirements of human learning and philosophy."

After giving an outline of the biography of Swedenborg, the Editor proceeds to consider his claims to be

regarded as a *teacher sent from God*, and as the herald of a New Christian Dispensation ; in doing which he very fairly admits that, “whatever the assertions of Swedenborg might have been, coming from a man so eminent in every branch of human learning, and from one so devoted to the service of God, they had, at least, a claim to a *fair and impartial hearing* ;” and, it is added, “neither was a fair hearing denied him.* They† merely asked, as it was just they should, the ground of his claims, and the ends to which they tended.”

In the pursuit of the same enquiry by the Editor, the preliminary and necessary question is considered, whether, at the time in which Swedenborg appeared, the Church was in need of any such teacher ; because, if it was not, we cannot suppose that any was sent. The Editor, therefore, very properly considers this question first of all, and with a view to furnish an answer, presents the following account of—

THE STATE OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH.

“Now‡ what was the case ? The world, for seventeen centuries and a half, had received the Revelations of Jesus Christ communicated by the Church. From the Apostles’ times, through ages of trial and of controversy ; amid the councils of the wisest and the holiest ; with a faith proved in the blood of a thousand martyrdoms ; the doctrines of the Church had descended, and in all their leading aspects had been universally received. Upon what principle could it be demanded that now, of a sudden, and without any preparation or forewarning, to one individual should be im-

* We are at a loss to know when it was granted.

† Who ?

‡ Chap. ii., page 203.

parted an entirely new Revelation, uprooting and discarding the old; that from one individual should arise a totally new idea both of the Scriptures and of the state and prospects of man; a New Church, in comparison with which, all that preceded it was in shadow and confusion, if not in positive error? And yet this was in reality the claim set forth. Things hidden from David and the Prophets in the dispensation of the Jews; things hidden from the Apostles and the Evangelists in the dispensation of Jesus Christ; things hidden from the Confessors and Martyrs of the purest ages of the Gospel, were now for the first time made known and revealed. Up to the eighteenth century the whole Church had been in error, and was now in error. Both the Roman and the Greek, the Church of the West and of the East, all had been equally in the dark. In Swedenborg alone the light had been disclosed. The *Heavenly Doctrines of the New Jerusalem* were those alone which men were now to receive and embrace.” “The question of course arises—Where is the commission of the herald? Where are the grounds on which the proclamation is made?”

A very proper question, and one which in its place will receive a plain answer. For, undoubtedly, it is not to be expected that the Lord of the Church should interpose in its behalf, when there was no need of the interposition. It does not appear that the Vicar admits that it is opposed to the course of Divine Providence that prophets should any more arise in the world; for, on the contrary, he observes:* “It is very plain that, since nothing is impossible with God, there *may* arise prophets at any time in the world, and there may arise men of professed spiritual agency, to direct and impart the counsels of Almighty

* Page 205.

God. We are not told that the gifts of the Spirit are at any time to cease in the Church ; neither are we told of any epoch at which revelations are no longer possible."

Considering that in the contest of Swedenborg's writings with the religious world, the very contrary to this has been generally maintained, this theoretical admission is, so far, of considerable importance. For, be it observed, the Editor does not re-echo the popular cry that no more prophets are to be expected in the world, no more men invested with spiritual commission to direct and impart the counsels of Almighty God, and that further revelations from God are no longer possible ; all these persuasions, in virtue of which the writings of Swedenborg have been so often and so unceremoniously set aside, are founded, it seems, entirely upon a mistake.

This being the case, let us now proceed to take the Editor at his word. Let us suppose that at some time or other certain prophets arise in the world, and men of professed spiritual agency, to direct and impart the counsels of Almighty God. To whom are they to impart them ? Where is the Church willing to receive, waiting to be taught ? The Catholic Church ? Undoubtedly, if the prophets will but teach the Catholic faith, and communicate nothing but what has been before known ; otherwise, " things hidden from David and the prophets, things hidden from the apostles and evangelists, things hidden from confessors and martyrs, are now for the first time revealed." If, then, such persons are to come, let them come as impersonations of the past, not as heralds of the future.

The truth is, the Catholic Church has so long been accustomed to regard herself as the sole mistress of her own destinies, that even should teachers come from God, she is by no means in a mood to give them a welcome.

Suppose, however, the case were otherwise, and that prophets arrive; the question arises, What are the counsels they come to impart? Are they the same with those of the Catholic Church? Can they be proved by tradition and universal consent? Are their interpretations of Scripture in harmony with those of the Fathers? Or do we not find that the Church is rather in an attitude to admonish and instruct the prophets, instead of the prophets the Church? The prophets are come, and what are they to do? The key of the Bible is already in the hands of the Church; the creeds are settled; the councils must not be disturbed; no additions to the faith must be admitted, except what the Church is pleased to authorize; and no curtailment, at the peril of being denounced. Touch not, taste not, handle not, is the rule; or, alas for the prophets!

Is not this the very case in regard to Swedenborg in the present instance? It is first of all represented that the Church is not in a state to require the services of any prophets of God; this being agreed on, and everything settled immutably beforehand, made fast and firm in its *statu quo*, the Catholic Church may safely, nevertheless, open the door to them, if they are sent. What then if they arrive?—nobody wants them. They can do only what the Church has already done, teach what the Church has already taught, settle what the Church has already settled, and leave unsettled what the Church has not thought proper to settle.—Nay, but they may work miracles! Truly, if they will do so in behalf of the Church; if not, they lose the evidence of their commission.

Although, therefore, the concession that prophets may reappear in the world is theoretically important, it is practically useless, and leads to no more results than if they were at once peremptorily excluded.

We are not, however, to presume that the Lord will or will not send teachers to His Church, according to the opinion which the Church may form of her own requirements; and as the Editor has spoken somewhat too felicitously of the Church at the time in which Swedenborg appeared, may we venture to supply a few omissions from some of the most eminent witnesses, most of them of the Church of England?

There is an age which has peculiarly distinguished itself as the *Age of Reason*, the *Age of Infidelity*, the *Age of Unbelief*; to what period in the history of the Church does it belong? Is it not to the very century in which Swedenborg's writings appeared? Let us enquire.

In one of his Charges to the Clergy, in the year 1738, Archbishop Secker thus writes: "Men have always complained of their own times, and always with too much reason. But though it is natural to think those evils the greatest which we feel ourselves, and therefore mistakes are easily made in comparing one age with another, yet in this we cannot be mistaken, that an open and professed disregard to religion is become, through a variety of unhappy causes, the distinguishing character of the present age; that this evil is grown to a great height in the metropolis of the nation, is daily spreading through every part of it, and bad in itself as any can be, must of necessity bring in most others after it. Indeed, it hath already brought in such dissoluteness and contempt of principle in the higher part of the world, and such profligate intemperance and fearlessness of committing crimes in the lower, as must, if this impropriety stop not, become absolutely fatal. And God knows, far from stopping, it receives, through the ill designs of some persons, and the inconsiderateness of others, a continual increase. Christianity is now ridiculed and railed

at with very little reserve, and the teachers of it without any at all.”

About the year 1743, or five or six years after this was written, Swedenborg declares that *his spiritual sight was opened*, and that he was called by God to the office of instructing and forewarning the Church.

In the year 1749 the state of Christianity at that time, especially as regards this country, is thus described by the celebrated Dr. Hartley, at the conclusion of his work entitled *Observations on Man** :—

“There are six things which seem more effectually to threaten ruin and dissolution to the present state of Christendom :

“First : The great growth of Atheism and Infidelity, particularly amongst the governing part of these States.

“Secondly : The open and abandoned lewdness to which great numbers of both sexes, especially in the high ranks of life, have given themselves up.

“Thirdly : The sordid and avowed self-interest, which is almost the sole motive of action in those who are concerned in the administration of public affairs.

“Fourthly : The licentiousness and contempt of every kind of authority, Divine and human, which is so notorious in inferiors of all ranks.

“Fifthly : The great worldly-mindedness of the Clergy, and their gross neglects in the discharge of their proper functions.

“Sixthly : The carelessness and infatuation of parents and magistrates with respect to the education of youth, and the consequent early corruption of the present generation.”

“Christendom, in general, seems ready to assume to

* Vol. II., pages 441, 455.

itself the place and lot of the *Jews*, after they had rejected their Messiah, the Saviour of the world. Let no one deceive himself or others. *The present circumstances of the world are extraordinary and critical, beyond what has ever yet happened.* If we refuse to let Christ reign over us, as our Redeemer and Saviour, we must be slain before his face, as enemies, at his Second Coming.”

It was during this state of things, or in this very year, that Swedenborg publishes the first volume of the *Arcana*, in which he first announces the opening of his spiritual sight.*

“Of the Lord’s divine mercy it has been granted me now for several years to be constantly and uninterruptedly in company with spirits and angels, to hear them converse with each other, and to converse with them; hence it has been granted me to hear and see things in another life which are astonishing, and which have never before come to the knowledge of any man, nor entered into his idea. In consequence hereof I have been instructed concerning different kinds of spirits, concerning the state of souls after death, concerning Hell or the lamentable state of unbelievers, concerning Heaven, or the most happy state of the faithful; particularly concerning the doctrine of Faith, which is acknowledged throughout all Heaven.”

In the year 1751, that is about two years after, the cautious Bishop Butler thus addresses the Clergy in one of his Charges: “‘When the Son of Man cometh, shall He find faith upon the earth?’ How near this time is God only knows, but *this kind of Scripture signs of it is too apparent.* For as different ages have been distinguished by different sorts of particular errors and vices, the deplorable distinction of ours is an avowed scorn of religion in some, and a growing disregard to it in the generality.”

About the year 1755 the French philosophers re-echo the infidelity of England in their attacks upon Christianity. It was Bolingbroke that set up Voltaire, who was a contemporary of Swedenborg, and of whom it is said, that*—

“He must be looked upon as the great adversary, not only of the particular Roman Catholic religion of his country, but of Christianity itself under every form and description. Fanaticism was at first, and indeed always, the avowed object of his attack; but as he advanced in years, the destruction of Christianity itself seems to have been the great passion of his life.”

In the year 1757 was accomplished, according to Swedenborg, the Consummation of the Age; and he says that without a knowledge obtained concerning a Consummation of the Age, the second Advent of the Lord, and the New Church, the Word is as it were closed.†

In the year 1771 Swedenborg published his work entitled the *True Christian Religion*, in which he affirms, Art. 757, “That *the present day is the last time of the Christian Church*, which is foretold and described by the Lord in the Gospels and in the Revelation.” Swedenborg departs this life in the next year.

Now it is in reference to the events which shook Christendom to its centre a few years after that, in the *Appendix* to Dr. Leland’s *View of the Deistical Writers*, the following observations occur‡ :—

“Never before did modern Europe experience a more dreadful concussion—a concussion already productive of

* *Lecture on History*, by W. Smyth, Professor of Modern History in the University of Cambridge, Vol. I., page 84: 1842.

† *Coronis*; or, *Appendix to the True Christian Religion*, Art. 1.

‡ Vol. II, pages 480, 481, 482.

the greatest changes, and announcing still greater and more numerous. For the fermentation which everywhere agitates the minds of men cannot soon subside."

"Now if these are not the *judgments of God in the earth*, when did they ever exist? When has His arm ever been more conspicuously displayed from the clouds, wielding the threatening sword, to impress on the inhabitants of the world the long-forgotten lessons of *righteousness*? These judgments are not to be confounded with the more doubtful ones of hurricanes, earthquakes, tempests, or inundations, which, though adapted to rouse men to reflection, and to a serious review of their moral state, spring not immediately from human depravity, and bear not along with them the distinct impressions of moral evil. The judgments which now afflict mankind, can all be traced back to the most polluted sources of corruption, and, originating in the profligacy of the higher stations of society, have diffused their contagion through the whole social mass. *From the sole of the foot even to the head, there is no soundness in it; but wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores. It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed, because His compassions fail not.*" Isa. i. 6; Lament. iii. 22.

"After this view of the vices and calamities of the present times, of the events which have so recently happened, and of that peculiar aspect of the world which admits of no other solution but that of an extraordinary appointment of Divine Providence, to punish the sins of men, to reprove in particular the decay of religion, and to warn us to return, before it be too late, to her forsaken paths, it will now be proper to collect the instruction which the judgments of God, so loudly proclaimed, are evidently calculated to convey."

“It is clear that *Divine Providence is prosecuting some great and extensive plan in this lower world.* What its peculiar nature may be, it would be rash and presumptuous to determine. But, with a desire of moral and religious improvement, it certainly becomes us to attend to the most striking features of the Divine Dispensations, as far as they can be discerned by our feeble and clouded sight. *Everything now happening on the great theatre of human affairs is extraordinary, and repugnant to the experience of ages immediately preceding.*”

Moreover the character of this very period, and for some years after, is thus further described by the Bishop of Durham, Dr. Van Mildert, in the following words, speaking of scoffers walking after their own lusts :—

“If* it be more characteristic of one age than of another to abound in such opponents to truth, and to be distinguished by such marks of impiety, have we not reason to consider the present day as pre-eminently entitled to that distinction, and therefore as indicating, perhaps, *the approaching close of the Christian Dispensation upon earth ?*”—He then speaks of a general confederacy throughout Europe, having for its object a universal apostacy from religion, and the *utter extirpation of Christianity* from the earth. “All ranks,” says he, “and descriptions of persons being thus prepared and fitted, by every species of iniquity and delusion, for the designs of their execrable leaders, we may cease to be astonished at the tremendous catastrophe which ensued. Revolution is but the practical commentary on the pernicious principles on which it is originated. . . . Outrage upon outrage, horror upon horror, falsehood upon falsehood ; the annihilation of truth, order, justice, decency, and humanity, were the bitter fruits of that apostacy and

* Sermon XI., Boyle's *Lectures*.

blasphemy, to disseminate which had been the unceasing object of the professed adorers of Liberty and Reason.”

“It is as needless as it would be painful and disgusting to dwell more particularly upon this *tremendous confederacy for the overthrow of religion*; to narrate its studied impieties, its blasphemous mockeries, and its almost indescribable atrocities; or to enumerate the guiltless victims of its insatiable fury.”

Such are the observations which occur in a Sermon on 2 Peter iii. 3: “There shall come in the last days scoffers walking after their own lusts.”

Let us now refer to only one more description of that age by another *writer:—

“In allusion to the monstrous transactions of this portentous period, it has been eloquently and energetically observed, that the reign of Atheism was avowed the reign of terror. In the full madness of their career, in the highest climax of their horrors, they shut up the temples of God, abolished His worship, and proclaimed death to be an eternal sleep; *in the very centre of Christendom Revelation underwent a total eclipse*; while Atheism, performing on a darkened theatre its strange and fearful tragedy, confounded the first elements of society; blended every age, rank, and sex, in indiscriminate proscription and massacre, and convulsed all Europe to its centre, that the imperishable memorial of these events might teach the last generations of mankind to consider religion as the pillar of society, the parent of social order, and the safeguard of nations.”

To adduce further illustrations of the character of that age is unnecessary.

We will say nothing of the bold and open declarations

* Belsham's *History of Great Britain*, Vol. IX., page 108.

by the Protestant Church at the time, that the Pope and the Church of Rome are Antichrist; or by the Church of Rome, that the Greek and Protestant Churches are no Churches at all; but simply proceed to ask, How came these facts to be omitted—this unparalleled crisis of Christendom, as if it had never happened? With what semblance of justice can it be asserted that the alleged revelations of Swedenborg came “*of a sudden without any preparation or forewarning,*” except on the very account upon which we are forewarned in these words: “Watch ye therefore, lest coming *suddenly* He find you sleeping?”

In these quotations there are two prelates of the Church of England, and abundance of others might be introduced, expressing their serious apprehensions of “*the approaching close of the Dispensation;*” and the latter, in a note to the Sermon we have quoted, in speaking of *the things yet to come*, observes: “It is impossible, indeed, not to feel an increasing interest in researches of this kind, when we contemplate the fearful events which are continually taking place, and the *manifest indications of some great purpose to which the Almighty is now directing the course of human affairs.*”

But the question arises, whether this state of things has any relation to the present day; whether there are still “manifest indications of some great purpose to which the Almighty is now directing the course of human affairs?” An answer to this question may be found in the last utterances upon this subject in the name of the Catholic Church, A.D. 1864.*

“We live in times big with prognostics of future events. There has been aroused a religious movement both without

* *Sermons on the Reunion of Christendom*, by Members of the Roman Catholic, Oriental, and Anglican Communion, Vol. I., page 70.

and within the Church, which fills with amazement those who look on it. The Church arouses her children for the struggle. Everything gives tokens of the coming of some mighty moral crisis, when the Church and the present order of the civilized world shall have to pass through the crucible."

According to another testimony in the name of the Catholic Church :*—

"If the last half-century has been prolific in surprise, who shall say what the next may bring forth? It is clear that the Italian Revolution must have something more than a simple political significance. German Protestantism is held in solution; in England the contest between faith and unbelief grows daily more imminent, and the old theological war-cries become meaningless or obsolete. Everywhere there is an upheaving of the ground, a breaking-up of the foundations, a fearful looking for of judgments to come. *Men say that a prophet is needed*, for this age is out of joint. The wind, the fire, and the earthquake may have their work to accomplish, but shall we not also listen for the whispers of the still small voice?"

Assuming then, that in the awful times in which Swedenborg lived, there was a fearful need of Divine interposition for the regeneration of Christendom, and that he comes before Christendom as a medium to effect this purpose; the next question arises, What are his qualifications? Where is the commission of the herald? We claim the right to try the spirit whether he be of God. "For," says the Editor, "it is well known that Swedenborg comes before us as a teacher sent from God to admonish and instruct the Church. We do not judge against Swedenborg as against an impostor or a self-

* *Ibid.* page 94.

deceived enthusiast, of necessity, but we only follow the caution of the apostle and of our Lord, when we claim the right to try the spirit whether it really be of God or not.”

By all means let us *all* claim the right; not one side only, but the other; only let us be careful to make faithful and correct statements. Let us begin with the trial, and open it (as is done) with the question concerning the nature of his alleged

INSPIRATION.

The case, then, of Inspiration, is thus stated:—

“There* seem to be two distinct ways in which it has pleased Almighty God to make Himself known to the soul of man, while yet abiding in the world. The first is by a moving impulse or Divine afflatus (breathing) *from within*. The second is by carrying the soul or spirit of the man out of himself, and presenting to him a revelation *from without*. The prophets of the Old Testament and of the New are instances of the first. Visions and revelations are instances of the second. The gift of prophecy, either considered in its meaning of foretelling future events, or in its meaning of making known the truths of God, arises from the Divine afflatus, and is therefore called *inspiration*.”

After giving examples of genuine and spurious claims to inspiration of this kind, the Editor observes†: “None, however, of these cases touch that of Swedenborg. *His was not a case of inspiration from within. He laid no claim to such a gift.* He came under the second head of the Divine communications, viz., that which presents to the soul or spirit of man visions or revelations *out of the body*. This, we must bear in mind, is a perfectly distinct thing.”

* Page 205.

† Page 207.

It is here stated that Swedenborg laid no claim to inspiration *from within*, but only to visions and revelations given him *from without*. It thus seems that the trial begins by making two statements directly contrary to the fact.

With respect to the FIRST statement, Swedenborg expressly says that the Lord opened *his interiors* to perceive the interior sense of the Word, and to explain it to others by a true method of interpretation. This opening of his interiors was effected by an *Inspiration from within*, which consisted in an influx of Divine light into the rational powers of his mind, called by him *illustration*, whereby he was enabled to explain rationally to others the interior truths of the Holy Word in their celestial, spiritual, and natural senses. This was a higher *personal* inspiration than was communicated to the prophets, because what they wrote they did not understand. On the other hand, what the prophets wrote respectively as part of the Word of God, and as such, Divine, was of *far higher* inspiration than anything which Swedenborg wrote. We must always distinguish between the inspiration of the writer, and the inspiration of the thing written: they are by no means the same, though very generally confounded. The inspiration of Swedenborg was an inspiration of him only as an *interpreter*; still it was an inspiration *from within*, because it was a communication to him of interior perceptions of interior truths; and he expressly says that this inspiration was not derived from any spirit or angel, but from the Lord alone.

The assertion, therefore, that Swedenborg laid no claim to inspiration *from within* is a mistake, somewhat extraordinary considering that it is the very thing to which he did lay claim, as we proceed to shew.

On the subject of *Visions* and *Revelations* Swedenborg affirms:—

1.* “That no one is reformed by visions and by conversing with the dead, because they compel When spirits and angels speak with man by permission of the Lord, they never say any thing which takes away the freedom of reason, nor do they teach—for the Lord alone teaches man—but mediately through the Word in illustration. That this is the case hath been granted me to know from my own experience. I have discoursed with spirits and with angels now for several years; nor durst any spirit, neither would any angel, say any thing to me, much less instruct me about any thing in the Word, or any doctrinal derived from the Word; but the Lord alone taught me, Who was revealed to me, and afterwards continually did and does appear before my eyes as the Sun in which He is, as He appeareth to the angels; and He enlightened me.”

2.† “*Intellectual light* hath been given me, taken away, diminished, and moderated, both in thinking, speaking, and writing, and this frequently, and it hath been given me to perceive its varieties and discriminations. The light itself was perceived as an illumination, which illustrated the substances of the interior sight, as the lumen of the sun does the organs of corporeal sight. That general illumination caused the objects of things to appear, as the objects of the earth appear to an illuminated eye; and I have been instructed, that those variations existed according to communications with heavenly societies.”

3.‡ “The spiritual man sees spiritual things in the

* *Angelic Wisdom concerning Divine Providence*, art. 134, 135.

† *Arcana Cælestia*, art. 6608.

‡ *Angelic Wisdom concerning the Divine Love*, art. 355.

objects of nature, and the natural man natural things. As to myself, such things have been proofs to me of an influx from the spiritual into the natural, that is, from the spiritual world into the natural world, consequently from the Divine wisdom of the Lord. Consider also, can you think analytically of any form of government, any civil law, any moral virtue or spiritual truth, unless the Deity from His wisdom flow in from the spiritual world? As for me, I never could, nor can I now; for I have *perceptibly* and *sensibly* observed that influx now for nineteen years continually; wherefore *I say this from experience.*"

3.* "I have never received any thing relating to the *doctrines* of the New Church from any angel; but from the Lord alone, while I was reading the Word."

4.† "It has been," he asserts, "frequently granted me to perceive and also to see, that the light which enlightens the mind is true light, quite distinct from that which is called natural light. I have been elevated into that light more interiorly, and my understanding was enlightened in proportion to the elevation, until at length I perceived what I did not perceive before, and lastly such things as do not fall within comprehension from merely natural light. I have sometimes even felt indignant at such unworthy treatment by the natural mind of things which were so clearly and perspicuously perceived in the light of heaven. Since there is a light proper to the understanding, therefore we speak of the understanding in the same terms as of the *eye*, as that it *sees*, or is in light when it perceives, and that it is obscure and dark when it does not perceive; with many like things."

What now becomes of the assertion, that the case of

* *True Christian Religion*, art. 779. † *Heaven and Hell*, art. 130.

Swedenborg was not one of *inspiration from within*, and that he laid no claim to such a gift?

But let us next proceed to enquire how far it is true that all his *Revelations* and *Visions* came from *without*, which is the next assertion of the Editor. The point is of vital importance, as it bears directly upon the internal sense of Scripture.

First, with regard to the *Revelations*.

“Revelations,”* says he, “are either from *perception*, or from discourse with angels through whom the Lord speaks. They who are in good, and thence in truth—especially they who are in the good of love to the Lord—have *revelation* from *perception*; whereas they who are not in good and thence in truth, may indeed have *revelations*, yet not from *perception*, but by a living voice heard in them, thus by angels from the Lord. This latter *revelation* is external, but the former internal. The angels, especially the celestial, have *revelation* from *perception*, as had also the men of the most ancient Church, and some also of the ancient, but at this day scarcely any one; whereas very many have had *revelations* from discourse without *perception*, even who have not been principled in good; in like manner by *visions* or by dreams. Such were most of the *revelations* of the Prophets in the Jewish Church: they heard a voice, they saw a *vision*, and they dreamed a dream; but inasmuch as they had no *perception*, they were *revelations* merely verbal or visual, without a *perception* of what they signified; for genuine *perception* exists through heaven from the Lord, and affects the intellectual principle spiritually, and leads it to think perceptively as the thing really is, with an internal assent, of the source of which the intellectual principle is ignorant. The intellect supposes that

* *Arcana Cælestia*, art. 5121.

this assent has its origin from itself, and that it flows from the connection of things; whereas it is a dictate through heaven from the Lord, flowing into the interiors of the thought concerning such things as are above the natural and sensual principle, that is, concerning such things as are of the spiritual world or heaven."

Accordingly, Swedenborg thus further points out the distinction between the external revelation made to the Jews who were external men, and the internal revelation made to internal men, or the truly rational mind. On the passage in Exodus xix. 9, "*The Lord said unto Moses, Lo! I come unto thee in a thick cloud, that the people may hear thee,*" etc., it is observed, in the *Arcana Cœlestia* :—

"By *revelation* here in the internal sense, is not meant *revelation* such as was made to the Israelitish people from Mount Sinai, viz., that the Lord spake in a sonorous voice, and the surrounding people heard; but that *revelation* is meant which is not made by a sonorous voice, but inwardly (*intus*) in man. This *revelation* is made by the illustration of the internal sight, which is the understanding; when man, who is in the affection of truth from good, reads the Word. On such occasion illustration is made by the light of heaven, which is from the Lord as a Sun there. By that light the understanding is illustrated no otherwise than the external sight which is of the *eye*, by the light which is from the sun of the world. When the understanding is illustrated by that Divine light, it then perceives that to be true which is true; it acknowledges it inwardly (*intus*) in itself, and as it were seeth it. Such is the *revelation* of those who are in truth from good, when they read the Word. But they who are in the affection of truth from evil, that is, who desire to know truth merely for the sake of honours, lucre, reputation, and such like, these do not

see truths, but only see things which confirm the doctrinals of their own Church, whether those doctrinals be true or false. The light which illustrates on such occasions is not the Divine light from heaven, but is sensual light such as is that of the infernals, which light, at the presence of heavenly light, becomes merely thick darkness; for when these latter read the Word, they are altogether blind to the truth which does not make one with their own doctrinals.”

“By *revelation** is meant illustration when the Word is read, and in such case perception; for they who are in good and desire truth are so taught from the Word; but they who are not in good cannot be taught from the Word, but only be confirmed in such things as they have been instructed in from infancy; whether those things be true or false.”

In the case of those who are in the affection of truth Swedenborg contrasts, in the following manner, the internal evidence of truth arising from *within*, with the external evidence arising from *without*, or its reception upon external authority, whether it be that of Councils or Churches.

“He† who would have perception in things spiritual, must be in the affection of truth grounded in good, and must desire continually to know truths; hence his intellectual principle is illuminated; and when this is the case, then it is given to him to perceive from within (*intus*) some initiament of truth. But he who is not in the affection of truth, is influenced in all he knows by the doctrinals of the Church in which he believes, and because a priest, a presbyter, or a monk hath *said that it is so.*”

The question then here at issue is this: whether, in his alleged visions and revelations, Swedenborg has been faithful to the principles here laid down. Have his visions,

* *Arcana Cœlestia*, art. 8694.

† *Ibid.*, art. 5937.

or have they not any *internal evidence* of their truth; and if they have, what is it? Or do they rest only on the external evidence of mere assertion, as the Vicar affirms? In answer to this question; there are two ways, says the Vicar, in which Almighty God makes Himself known to the soul of man. The fundamental error with regard to the first we have considered:—

*“The second way is by carrying the soul or spirit of the man out of himself, and presenting to him a revelation from *without*. The Prophets of the Old Testament and of the New are instances of the first; Visions and Revelations are instances of the second.”

Visions and revelations as coming from *without* are said to require evidence coming from *without*; the evidence, namely, of signs and wonders; and as Swedenborg is said to adduce only external visions and revelations, and wrought no miracles, he has no evidence to produce beyond his own assertion. Now what is Swedenborg's own statement of the case, for the Vicar never once mentions it?

First we have the assertion:—

†“I foresee that many who read the memorable relations annexed to each chapter of this work, will believe them to be inventions of the imagination; but I protest in truth that they are not inventions, but were really seen and heard; not seen and heard in any state of the mind in sleep, but in a state of complete wakefulness; for it has pleased the Lord to manifest Himself to me, and to send me to teach those things which will belong to the New Church, which is meant by the New Jerusalem in the Revelation. For this purpose he has opened the interiors of my mind or spirit; by which privilege it has been permitted me to

* *The Swedenborgians*, p. 205.

† *True Christian Religion*, art. 851.

be with angels in the spiritual world, and with men in the natural world, and that now for twenty-seven years. Who in the Christian world would have known any thing of Heaven and Hell, unless it had pleased the Lord to open the spiritual sight of some person or other, and to shew and teach him?"

Here, then, is the assertion, and now comes the evidence :—

“That such things as are described in the foregoing Memorable Relations do actually appear in the heavens, is manifestly evident from similar objects being seen and described by John in the Apocalypse, and also by the Prophets in the Word of the Old Testament.”

Manifestly evident! From what? From similar objects seen and described in the Apocalypse and in the Old Testament. What is the cause of the similarity? The answer is, a common origin—the Sun of Heaven, the glory of the Lord. Swedenborg affirms that he saw that *Sun*; and what does he say of it? In *The True Christian Religion* he says :—

*“That God is light itself is owing to His being the *Sun* of the angelic heaven, which illuminates the *understandings* of all angels and of all men; for as the *eye* is enlightened by the light of the natural Sun, so is the *understanding* by the light of the spiritual Sun; and not only is it enlightened, it is also filled with *intelligence* in proportion to the love with which it receives it, since that light in its essence is wisdom.”

In the *Arcana Cælestia*† :—

“The light of heaven is such that while it illuminates the sight of spirits and angels, it also at the same time illuminates the *understanding*. This is an essential pro-

* Art. 59.

† Art. 2776. See, also, art. 4406.

perty of that light; so that in proportion as any one in heaven enjoys external light, in the same proportion he enjoys internal light; that is, in the same proportion he enjoys *understanding*. Hence it is evident in what the light of heaven differs from the light of the world."

So in the *Apocalypse Revealed* ;*—

"To walk in the light (*Apoc. xxi. 23, 24*) signifies to live according to Divine truths, and to see them inwardly in one's self, as the eye sees objects."

Here, then, is a clear case in which *thought* and *objects of sight* are inseparably connected with each other; the objects of sight being the external forms of the internal thought; and on this principle, by the law of Correspondence, Swedenborg interprets the objects of sight in the *Apocalypse*, such as the seven candlesticks, the tabernacle, temple, ark, altar, river, trees, paradise, wilderness, locusts, etc.; and in *Zechariah*, the chariots, horses, mountains, etc. These are subjects which Criticism has never yet explained. Nor has the Catholic Church, as is evident from its contradictory interpretations by the literalists Calmet and Bossuet on one side, and the series of mystical writers on the other. Then, with regard to Protestant interpreters, the office of one seems to be to correct or refute the other. One maintains that the *Apocalypse* does not predict any new form of Christianity; the other, that there is to be a total revolution in the Christian Church,—in fine, a new dispensation, as implied in the expressions, "a new heaven and a new earth," the "former heavens and the former earth" having passed away.†

* Art. 920.

† With regard to the celebrated Mr. Mede and Dr. Todd, it is said by Dr. Lee, late Regius Professor of Hebrew in the University of Cambridge,—

Now, under these circumstances, what is to relieve the student of prophecy from his embarrassment? A Roman Catholic writer, Pererius, has long since pointed out the only alternative; an alternative which, he says, has been adopted by many in the Church:—

*“According to the opinion of many in the Church, the Apocalypse must altogether remain incomprehensible, without an *especial revelation* from God.”

The fact is, the voice of the Catholic Church proclaims aloud to all true Catholics not the probability but the certainty of this *especial revelation*; as is manifestly shewn in its expectation of a coming Elijah. The very same expectation has found its way among Protestants:

†“I am very willing to admit,” says Dr. Burnet, Master of the Charter-House, “that Elias will come, according to the sense of the prophet *Malachi* (iv. 5, 6); but he will not come *with observation*, any more than he did in the person of John the Baptist. He will not bear the name of Elias, nor tell us he is the man that went to heaven in a fiery chariot, and is now come down again to give us warning of the last fire. But some Divine person may appear before the Second Coming of our Saviour as there did before His First Coming; and by giving a new light and life to the Christian doctrine, may dissipate the mists of error, and abolish all those little (?) controversies amongst good men, and the divisions and animosities that spring from them; enlarging their spirits by greater discoveries, and uniting them all in the bonds of love and
“The former does, indeed, allow a sort of make-shift Christian Church to exist; the latter wholly annihilates it, and both tell us, directly or indirectly, that theirs is the system of the primitive Church.”—*Preface and Introduction to An Enquiry into the Nature, Progress, and End of Prophecy*, p. 66.

* Pererius, *Prolegomena*, Dis., p. 1.

† *The Sacred Theory of the Earth*, vol. 2, p. 50.

charity, and in the common study of truth and perfection. Such an Elias the prophet seems to point at; and *may he come*, and be the great Peace-maker and Preparer of the ways of the Lord."

The same wish, and the same expectation of some inspired interpreter is expressed by Mr. Knox in one of his letters to Mrs. Hannah More; and he even says, "*I have not the smallest doubt of its taking place.*"

Mr. Isaac Williams, moreover, virtually acknowledges the same opinion when he says, that*—"what is written by the Spirit of God can be interpreted only by the Spirit of God;" and hence he welcomes the probability of some future luminary, some future St. Paul or St. Augustine, appearing in the Church, and observes:—

"What marvellous intellect, what ardent affection, what holiness of life combined! And if such should again be found *in one person*, great may be the advance in the fuller understanding of the written Word; and treasures of wisdom and knowledge therein even yet brought to light, such as are hid in Christ."

Suppose, now, that this one person, this anticipated luminary, should bear the name of Swedenborg. What does this luminary say? Let us hear him:—

"Any one may see that the Apocalypse could in no wise be explained but by the Lord alone, since every word of it contains arcana which never could be known without some *special illumination*, and *consequent revelation*; wherefore it has pleased the Lord to open the sight of my spirit and to teach me. It must not, therefore, be supposed that I have given any explanation of my own, nor that even of any angel, but only what I have had com-

* *The Beginning of the Book of Genesis*, pp. 9, 32.

municated to me from the Lord alone. The Lord said moreover, by an angel unto John—‘ Seal not the words of the prophecy of this book ;’ by which is signified, that they are to be manifested and laid open.”

In this claim to *special illumination*, is any thing more claimed than what the Catholic Church has always accorded to the person of some coming Elias ?

Nay ; but it is alleged that the case of Swedenborg is that of simple assertion.

On the contrary, Swedenborg proceeds to make good his statement ; and to supply us with a clear, consistent, and systematic interpretation of the Book, upon the principles of Correspondence acknowledged by the Church, but long since forgotten. What more legitimate evidence could he assign or could be required ? To suppose that such an interpretation can not be admitted until it has received the sanction of the Catholic Church, is as wise as to suppose that the warning to the Church of Laodicea ought not to be received till the Church herself had pronounced an opinion on its propriety. To plead the sole authority of the Catholic Church, when the question at issue is concerning the very existence of the Dispensation to which it belongs, is a kind of argument requiring no comment.

Well, then, in such a case, is there any test of truth whatever ? The answer is, there *is* one ; and that one is internal—“ He that hath ears to hear, let him hear,” not what the Churches say, but “ what the Spirit saith to the Churches.” Nay, but we are told that this is virtually leaving the question open to every man’s idiosyncracies ; if so, then to all who so think, the warning comes to nothing.

We say, then, that where the *objects of vision* are no

other than representations of the *internal thoughts*, it is evident that the vision is as real and true as the thought ; and that in this way has been supplied an interpretation of the visions recorded in Scripture ; particularly that great vision the Apocalypse, which has hitherto been involved in darkness, especially because the very idea of any one professing to interpret it rationally by light from the Sun of heaven, is treated as the sure sign of an erratic intellect.

“Men,” it is said, “*who are powerfully pre-occupied with one idea, may, by a prolonged concentration of it, see, by their mental eyes, that idea *materialized*.”

This was for a long time, and is even now, assigned as the origin of Swedenborg's visions. But as neologians began to apply the same test to the visions recorded in Scripture, so in this case Abraham, Moses, the Prophets, and Apostles fared no better than Swedenborg.

“The brain of Moses,” it was said, “may have been affected in a manner to *make him believe* that he saw, heard, and performed all that he relates. The family of Tobias, in like manner, *may have thought* that an angel appeared and spoke to them, and did such things as they saw and experienced. The organs of Saul may have been enlightened as much as if Samuel had indeed risen from the tomb. There is no ground to suspect the sincerity of those who have related these facts. No one now doubts the truth of *religious hallucinations* ; the only difference lies in the mode of explaining them.”

“Prolonged concentration of thought on one object is terminated by an *ecstatic* state of the brain, in which the object is reproduced, and affects the mind as if it were really perceived by the eyes of the body. With this state

* *Rational History of Hallucinations*, by Bois De Beaumont. See *The Prophetic Spirit*, by the Rev. A. Clissold, p. 129.

of the mind must be classed the visions of celebrated men.”

Such are the visions which the Vicar would lead his readers to conclude were the visions of Swedenborg; for he evidently regards them as mere aberrations of his brain; whereas we proceed to shew that they are rather aberrations of his critic.

We have seen what has become of the assertion that Swedenborg laid no claim to inspiration from within; and we now proceed to shew what becomes of the second assertion that—

“He* came under the second head of the Divine communications, namely, that which presents to the soul or spirit of a man visions or revelations *out of the body*. This we must bear in mind is a perfectly distinct thing.”

Now what is Swedenborg’s own statement of the case? Speaking of that state which the prophets experienced when they were out of the body and had a sight of such objects as exist in the spiritual world while the body remained at rest—a state which is called *the vision of God*—he observes:—

“This† is the state in which I have now lived six and twenty years; but with this difference, that I have been in the spirit and in the body at one and the same time, and only on *some particular occasions (aliquoties)* out of the body.”

The reason of this was, that his natural faculties might be enlightened by what he saw with the eyes of his spiritual body; and hence that he might be enabled to explain rationally what he saw with his spiritual eyes,

* *The Swedenborgians*, p. 207.

† *True Christian Religion*, art. 157.

viz., not representatives only but realities—an experience with which neither the prophets nor the apostles were favoured.

Hence, also, he further asserts respecting the realities which he witnessed :—

“ Since* it has pleased the Lord to open for me the eyes of my spirit, and to keep them open now for nineteen years, it has been given me to see the things which are in the spiritual world, as well as to describe them. I can assert that they are not VISIONS, but *things seen* in all wakefulness.” In the case of the Apocalypse, the things seen by Swedenborg are the same with those recorded by St. John ; so that they cannot be regarded as arising from aberrations of the brain, any more than those of St. John. For instance :

1. St. John says : “ *And I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the Word of God, and for the testimony which they held.*” Swedenborg says† that he also saw them, nay, that he frequently saw these souls ; and that by means of the last judgment they were set free from the custody under which they had been safely kept, and were elevated into heaven. This elevation, he says, was the process described in the twentieth chapter of the Apocalypse, under the title of *The First Resurrection*, which, he states, that he himself witnessed. He further says, that it corresponds to the resurrection recorded in the account of the Crucifixion, when “ the graves were opened, and many bodies of the saints arose, and went into the Holy City, and appeared unto many.” (Ezekiel xxxvii. 13, 14.) In both resurrections the spirits were liberated from their state of safe custody, and set free in

* *Continuation concerning the Spiritual World*, art. 35.

† *Ibid.*, art. 31 ; *Apocalypse Revealed*, art. 325.

consequence of the judgment that had been executed upon their enemies.

But is not this mere assertion? Certainly not; for he proceeds to give us an interpretation, founded upon it, of a chapter hitherto involved in the profoundest mystery; and has shewn the truth of the opinion entertained, as we have seen, by many in the Catholic Church, that no one could ever interpret that chapter without a *special revelation* from God.

2. To take another instance, namely, that of the *Dragon*: “*The angel laid hold on the Dragon, and cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up and set a seal upon him that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled.*” St. John says that he saw this *Dragon*: Swedenborg says that he also saw it. But is not this mere assertion? Certainly not; for he explains that which St. John has left involved in mystery. The *Dragon*, he says, was a *representative form* of a vast body of professing Christians of the character thus described:—

“It was granted me to see this representation, that I might know and make known who are understood by the *Dragon* in the Apocalypse; namely, that the *Dragon* means all who read the Word, hear sermons, and perform the rites of the Church, making no account of the concupiscences of evil which beset them, and inwardly meditating thefts and frauds, adulteries and obscenities, hatred and revenge, lies and blasphemies; and who thus live like devils in spirit, and like angels in body. These constituted the body of the *Dragon*; but the tail was composed of those who, when in the world, lived in faith separated from charity, and were like the former in regard to thoughts and intentions.”

These professing members of the Catholic Church would, of course, account for Swedenborg's interpretation on the ground of aberration of the brain.

3. To take another instance : St. John says he *saw* the judgment upon the Babylonians ; Swedenborg says that he also *saw* it :*—

“ I have seen them, I have heard them, I have spoken with them. . . . That the Babylon there treated of has been destroyed no one but he who *saw* it can know ; and to me it was given to *see* how the last judgment was brought about, and thoroughly accomplished upon all, especially upon those of Babylon. I will therefore describe it.”

But is not this mere assertion ? Certainly not ; for, first, he explains the reason why the revelation to him was made :—

“ This was granted me, principally in order to reveal to the world that the things predicted in the Apocalypse are Divinely inspired, and that the Apocalypse is a prophetic book of the Word ; for if this—and if at the same time the internal sense which is in each expression of that book, as in each expression of the Prophets of the Old Testament—were not revealed to the world, that book might possibly be rejected on account of its not being understood. And this would further make men totally incredulous of its contents, nay, of any such thing as a Last Judgment to come ; in which disbelief those of Babylon would confirm themselves more strongly than others. Lest this should be, it pleased the Lord to make me an eye witness.”

But, secondly, who were the Babylonians here referred to by Swedenborg ? He says † that “ by Babylon or Babel is meant the love of dominion over the holy things of the

* *Continuation*, art. 28. *Last Judgment*, art. 56, 60.

† *Apocalypse Revealed*, art. 177.

Church, grounded in self-love ; and inasmuch as that love rises in proportion as it is left without restraint, and the holy things of the Church are the holy things of heaven, therefore by Babylon or Babel is likewise signified dominion over heaven.”

Such being the character of the Babylonians upon whom the last judgment was performed in the spiritual world, what does Swedenborg say that he then perceived ?

*“ When the hidden things of the heart were laid open, it was perceived that more than half of those who had usurped the power of opening and shutting heaven were downright Atheists. But since dominion is rooted in their mind as in the world, and is based on this principle that all power was given by the Father to the Lord Himself, and that this power was transferred to Peter, and by order of succession to the heads of the Church, therefore an oral confession about the Lord remains adjoined to their atheism ; but even this exists only so long as they enjoy some dominion by means of it.”

This was written about the year 1758, or at a time when some of our bishops were apprehending the close of the Dispensation ; and when, for some thirty years after, so great was the spread of Atheism—especially in France, that in the very centre of Christendom Revelation underwent a total eclipse. Many bishops and priests renounced their faith in Christianity, a Reign of Terror dissolved the order of society, ecclesiastical property was confiscated, and the Gallican Church of that day came to an end. It had previously come to an end in the spiritual world, as Swedenborg, thirty years before, had openly announced ; and that was the reason why it afterwards came to an end in the natural world.

* *Last Judgment*, art. 56.

Are all these things aberrations of the brain? Were Swedenborg's interpretations, and visions so-called, mere gratuitous assertions, without any *proof*? Do we refuse to believe till miracles or signs and wonders are wrought?

This, however, brings us to the subject of

MIRACLES.

On this topic the Editor's argument is as follows:*

“Upon the whole, then, such communications between God and man are by no means uncommon or unusual. Just so, then, say the advocates of Swedenborg, was it with him whom we follow. Just in this manner did the Almighty divide the spiritual nature of man from the carnal, and, as in St. Paul's case, present before his view, visions and revelations in the third heaven; visions which were otherwise beyond the reach of mortal view. If revelations were imparted in the first century, why should they not also be imparted in the eighteenth? If Moses, if Abraham, if the Apostles, if St. Paul received visions and raptures, why should not Emanuel Swedenborg? And then, with the fullest confidence in every word he utters, he rises up and says, ‘Of the Lord's mercy it has been granted to me now for several years to be constantly and uninterruptedly in company with spirits and angels, hearing them converse with each other, and conversing with them. Hence it has been permitted to me to hear and see stupendous things in the other life which have never before come to the knowledge of any man, nor entered his imagination. I have been instructed concerning different kinds of spirits, and the state of souls after death; concerning Hell, or the lamentable state of the unfaithful;

* *The Swedenborgians*, pages 211, 212, 213, 215.

concerning Heaven, or the most happy state of the faithful; and particularly concerning the doctrine of faith which is acknowledged throughout all heaven.' Why should not Swedenborg be believed, say his advocates, when he thus writes, as well as St. Paul, when he tells us, in the Epistle to the Corinthians, that he was carried up into the third heaven and heard unspeakable words?

"The answer is plain, simple, and conclusive. We do not believe that Moses, Abraham, the prophets, or any holy men of Scripture received the visions which they relate, *simply because they say so*. We do not believe that St. Paul was carried up into the third heaven *simply because he said so*; but because they and he rest the grounds of their assertion upon a vast number of collateral proofs and signs. If Swedenborg had brought forward, in his case, any such collateral proofs and signs as those which St. Paul did, or the prophets did, then we should believe what he said, with similar confidence. Now what was the case in all these visions and revelations which we have just recorded from the Holy Scriptures? Did they stand alone or rest for their testimony on the *simple assertion* of those to whom they were revealed? Quite the contrary. Signs and wonders; practical counteractions of the ordinary course of nature; the voice of God speaking to men on all sides in parallel testimony, and signifying that the assertions of those holy men were not mere assertions, but rested upon *Him*; these things confirmed and sealed the asserted visions." . . . "What the Apostles said in words, they confirmed by works; so that it was very little in them to say—'I have seen a *vision*—I have received a *revelation*; indeed it was nothing until they began to raise the dead to life.'"

The argument, simply stated, is as follows. Visions

and revelations were presented to the prophets, and to St. Paul when he was *out of the body* and caught up into the third heaven: we do not believe that visions and revelations were given to the prophets and to St. Paul, “*simply because they say so,*” therefore we do not believe in those of Swedenborg “*simply because he says so.*” If we believe they were given to St. Paul, it is because he also wrought signs and wonders; but as Swedenborg wrought none, we are not warranted in believing in his visions and revelations at all; on the other hand, “if Swedenborg had brought forward, in his case, any such collateral proofs and signs as those which St. Paul did, or the prophets, then we should believe what he said with similar confidence.”

Now to an objection of this nature Bishop Horsley replies in the following manner:—

“Every* man may be allowed to say that he will not believe without sufficient evidence; but none can, without great presumption, pretend to stipulate for any particular kind of proof, and refuse to attend to any other if that which he may think he should like best should not be set before him. This is, indeed, the very temper of infidelity”—

“A general revelation could never be, if no proof might be sufficient for a reasonable man but the immediate testimony of his own senses. The benefit of every revelation must in that case be confined to the few individuals to whom it should be first conveyed.”

“To perceive truth by its proper evidence is of the formal nature of the rational mind; as it is of the physical nature of the eye to see an object by the light that it reflects, or of the ear to hear sounds which the air conveys to it.” . . . “No man the less clearly sees the light

* *Sermons* on John **xx.** 29, “Thomas, because thou hast seen me thou hast believed.”

because it is not seen by another who is blind ; nor are the distinctions of colour less to all mankind because a disordered eye confounds them.”

In the present case the *eye* is the understanding, and consequently the perception of genuine truth depends upon the state of the understanding, as natural sight upon the state of the eye. Where this understanding is darkened it is unable to see that truth is truth and good is good, and consequently demands external evidence. This, accordingly, is the evidence to which alone the Vicar of Frome appeals—the evidence of miracles.

Let us now apply the principle here laid down by Bishop Horsley to the case of Swedenborg.

We have already seen that the kind of inspiration which Swedenborg claimed, was an inspiration or influx *from within* into the *rational powers of his mind*, by means of which he was enabled to explain in a rational and intelligible manner the things which pertain to the kingdom of God ; this kind of illumination is directly opposed to that species of faith which professes to believe in mysteries which reason cannot comprehend. Whether he was right or wrong in this respect is not now the question. It is the case of his own inspiration as stated by himself. Now when doctrines are taught which are confessedly inexplicable mysteries, it is obvious that in this respect they are so far destitute of any internal evidence. External evidence is therefore their proper foundation, and hence the utility of miracles in cases of this kind ; as also of tradition, Church authority, and so forth. From this point of view, miracles have been regarded as the proper evidence of the received doctrines of the Church ; and faith, not reason, the proper medium by which we receive them. Now miracles, considered as external evidence, do not explain a mystery. They

are only said to prove or confirm it ; after this kind of proof, however, the rational powers of the mind remain as dark as before ; reason itself is not the least benefited by miracles or doctrines of this kind ; no, nor by visions or revelations of any kind, unless they too are rationally explained and understood. When, however, they once come to us in this form, the question of course occurs, What, in this case, is the use of miracles ? No one requires external evidence to prove the truth of that of which reason has convinced him already ! No true Christian requires a miracle to prove that the " pure in heart shall see God ;" but if he did not understand what purity of heart means, he might require a miracle to prove it ; as such, he would simply have faith in what he was taught ; while purity of heart would be as great a mystery to him as the Tripersonality, and other mysterious dogmas.

Now Swedenborg wrote in a century which was distinguished as an age of reason, in opposition to an age of blind faith in the mysteries of Christianity. The charge against the Christianity of that day by infidel writers, was, that it had become a compound of inexplicable mysteries and absurd explications ; hence it was necessary, as they thought, to supplant faith by reason ; and the history of that age furnishes us with the struggle between the two. At this period appears Swedenborg, professing to put down unbelieving reason by believing reason ; in other words, to contend against merely natural reason with the weapons of *inspired reason*.* It is obvious that in a dispensation of this kind, miracles, as a mere external evidence, have no place, and therefore it is that Swedenborg wrought none. This remark may be illustrated by the

* Called by Swedenborg *illustration*.

following, in the article on the Swedenborgians, when speaking of the sophistry of infidel philosophy; *—

“But it was not so in Swedenborg. When, for a moment, we seem inclined to smile at some of the strange ideas he propounds, the next moment we are checked by the *extreme beauty, chasteness, and holiness which lies at the foundation of the thought which he expresses*. There is no end of the wildness of his poetic fancy, treating the deep things of God with a strain of novelty which startles us at first, but which *always ends in making us reflect*. Whatever his revelations are, however visionary the doctrines he propounds, *we always find some deep and hidden reasons for what he says*. The poet is balanced by the philosopher.”

In this remark has not the critic furnished an answer to himself? for if a reader perceives extreme beauty, chasteness, and holiness lying at the foundation of the thoughts of a writer, and if, still further, he always finds some deep and hidden *reasons* for what the author says, what place is left for the external evidence of miracles? Now this beauty, chasteness, and holiness which the Editor sees in *some* parts of Swedenborg's writings, other persons think they see in *all*.

The same observation applies to the so-called *visions* of Swedenborg, and which, as we have seen, were not properly *visions*, much less *visions out of the body*; for they were seldom seen by him when out of the body, but generally when he was in the body. He distinctly says, that he was in the spirit among those who are in another life, and in the body with those who are in the world, and that he was in each world at the same time, and in both in the conscious exercise of his faculties. A considerable portion of the so-

called *Visions* consists of arguments on the doctrines of Christianity, and rational expositions of important points in morals and philosophy; where the introduction of miracles, as external evidence, would be about as much in place as in the Elements of Euclid, the Ethics of Aristotle, or the Logic of Whately. In these and other parts of his writings, Swedenborg professes to shew how various passages in Scripture have been misinterpreted, and the genuine doctrine of the Trinity and Atonement misrepresented. These statements the Editor of *The Old Church Porch* is pleased to call thoroughly *heretical*; and yet, notwithstanding, he does not hesitate to say, "If Swedenborg had brought forward, in his case, any such collateral proofs and signs as those which St. Paul did, or the prophets did, then we should *believe what he said* with similar confidence!"—"On the mere deficiency of collateral proof, *not on the ground of the improbability of the thing*, do we, without hesitation, reject and dismiss the claim of the Swedenborgians, and set them down among the schismatics of our unhappy age."—P. 216.

Not far from the very time when Swedenborg began to write his theological works, an intelligent clergyman thus wrote in a work,* dedicated to the contemporary Bishop of Winchester:—"Once more, let not Romish miracles nor shews of great sanctity delude you. Let them know that these are not appropriated to the true Church, but are foretold as things which should abound in the Antichristian Church. Now as needful and real miracles and true sanctity once were marks and evidences of the Christian religion, so signs or miracles 'are not for them that believe, but for them that believe not.' High and great

* Pyle's *Paraphrase on the Revelations*: Address to the Reader. A.D. 1735.

pretences to continual and useless miracles are foretold to be the marks of the grand apostasy, the Man of Sin, who opposeth himself against God, *i.e.*, Antichrist. For that man is foretold to come 'with all workings of Satan, with all power, and signs, and lying wonders, whereby he deceiveth all them that dwell on the earth, and, if it were possible, the very elect.' Concerning any Popish miracle there needs but one question to be asked, *viz.*, To what purpose, or for the proof of what doctrine was it wrought? No *true* doctrine can be in want of it; all religious truths are already sufficiently confirmed either by the demonstrable principles of *reason*, or by Divine Revelation; and as to *false* doctrines all the miracles in the world can never prove any one of them to be *true*."

Another writer* observes:—"If a miracle were to be wrought equal to raising the dead, and then the performer were to say that it was to shew that transubstantiation was true, I should despise the miracle-worker as I would reject the doctrine."

Now if the doctrines taught by Swedenborg are *in limine* declared to be untrue, would not the circumstance of his adducing miracles in their support be set down as the mark of Antichrist? That any one should demand miracles in support of certain tenets, and say that if they were wrought he would believe in these tenets with as much confidence as in the teaching of St. Paul, and then forthwith proceed by a course of argument to shew the tenets to be intrinsically false, is not saying much for the teaching of the apostle. It is indeed asserted by the Editor, that the Catholic Church rests on the miracles of ages. If so, miracles, as already stated, are the proper foundation of its faith; and yet on the passage "*When*

* Vol. ii., page 491, of *Apocalyptic Sketches*.

Christ cometh will he do more miracles than this man?" John vii. 31, Chrysostom observes, "Minds of the grosser sort are influenced not by *doctrine*, but by *miracles*;" and again, on the words in the same chapter, ver. 46, "*Never man spake like this man,*"—"Not only is their wisdom to be admired for not wanting *miracles*, but for being *convinced by His teaching only*; since they do not say never man did such *miracles* as this man, but never man *spake* like this man; but also their boldness in saying this to the Pharisees, who were such enemies of Christ."

A modern Church of England commentator (Dean Alford) speaks of "our Lord's known low estimate of *miracle faith*," and observes, in accordance with other commentators on John iv. 41, "*Except ye see signs and wonders ye will not believe,*" that "it indicates the contrast between the Samaritans who believed on Him for His *word*, and His own countrymen who received Him only because they had seen the *miracles* which he did at Jerusalem."

If, therefore, it be affirmed that the Catholic Church has received its faith on the ground of the signs and wonders performed in support of it, is it not making it appear to considerable disadvantage by the side of the Samaritans? "I speak to the people of God," however, says Augustine, upon the foregoing text; "How many of us are there who have believed, and yet what signs have we seen? That which was done *then*, portended what is doing *now*. The Jews were, or are now, like the Galileans; we, on the other hand, are like the Samaritans. The Gospel we have heard, the Gospel we have consented to, through the Gospel we have believed in Christ, yet have we seen no signs and we demand none."

If, then, signs and wonders are not the legitimate evidence of the truth of any doctrine, the question arises, What is? And to this question a plain and practical answer is given by our Saviour: “*If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God;*” which a modern Church of England commentator* thus paraphrases: “He shall be qualified to judge of my doctrine, as having a mind not warped by *prejudice*, as the eye does only distinguish colors when it is not suffused with morbid humours; for otherwise, what we wish to be false we do not readily believe to be true.”

This remark serves very aptly to illustrate the Catholic tradition concerning the advent of another Elias.

In regard to this subject, we have just seen that our opponent has rested the argument of the Catholic Church against Swedenborg on the ground of his having performed no miracles in proof of his commission—†“The Catholic Church rests on the miracles of ages.”—“On the mere deficiency of collateral proof (namely, that of miracles), not on the ground of the improbability of the thing, do we, without hesitation, *reject* and *dismiss* the claim of the Swedenborgians, and set them down among the schismatics of our unhappy age; nay, in‡ another place, among ‘blasphemers or heretics.’”

Is it so? For, nevertheless, it seems that all this alleged schismatical, blasphemous, or heretical doctrine might, according to the Vicar, be received as truly Catholic, provided only it had been accompanied by the collateral proof of miracles. “On the mere deficiency of collateral proof” (viz., that of miracles), “do we, without hesitation, reject, and dismiss the claim of the Swedenborgians.”

* Bloomfield's *Recensio Synoptica*.

† Page 216.

‡ Page 294.

And now, in the next place, comes the question already referred to, concerning the advent of another Elias.

How is it that our opponent has so systematically ignored the Catholic tradition upon this subject; especially as he is so zealous an advocate for it in all other cases? For according to this tradition, which is said to be universally received by the Church, some messenger of God is expected to come in the spirit and power of another Elias, to announce to the Church, as in the time of the Baptist, the Consummation of the Age; to emancipate it from its evils and its falsifications of truth; to throw new light upon the Scriptures by means of a special illumination; to restore the Church to its true unity as the body of Christ; and to work signs and wonders in proof of his commission; and yet, nevertheless, all these claims to consideration are to be set aside, to be "*rejected*" and "*dismissed*" by the Church of that day. How so?

"How* are we to conceive," says Father Lambert, "that a messenger of God, clothed in characters so beautiful, and charged with a ministry so holy and useful, should, nevertheless, be unrecognized, rejected with contempt by the tribe of priests, pastors, pontiffs of the true religion, and by the immense multitude of Christians who are seduced and misled by their chiefs?"

This question Father Lambert answers, by referring to a corresponding state of things in the Jewish Church; where, he says, notwithstanding "the numberless Divine miracles" that were wrought, the Jewish Church "rejected the Messiah, treated him as a being possessed with a devil, as being a blasphemer, and, as such, caused him to die on the Cross."

* *Exposition des Prédications et des Promesses Faites à l'Eglise pour les derniers temps de la Gentilité.* Par Le Père Lambert. Tome premier, p. 172.

So much, then, for the evidence of miracles. The power of false principles, in which the Pharisees of former times were born and bred, shewed itself to be stronger than the power of signs and wonders.

It is obvious, then, upon this principle, that the real evidence of Swedenborg's mission is to be found in (what we conceive to be) the intrinsic truth and rationality of his writings, and not in any mere *assertion* of any individual. Nor does Swedenborg anywhere require us to believe him on any such authority only; nor has the Editor brought forward one single passage, either from the writings of Swedenborg or his advocates, asserting that his revelations are to be received *simply because he says so!*

We now proceed to the writer's observations on Swedenborg's interpretations of

THE HOLY SCRIPTURES.

“The* idea of Swedenborg was that God certainly did speak to man by His written Word, and therefore he believes in the Bible; but he by no means takes that Bible in the sense, or under the canonical rules of interpretation, by which the Church has been guided throughout all ages.”

One would be very glad to know what “the canonical rules of interpretation” are by which the Church has been guided “*throughout all ages;*” one would even be glad to know what are the canonical books of Scripture itself, by which the Church “has been guided throughout all ages.” None but those who are ignorant of the real facts of the case will ever be misled by the expression, “canonical rules of interpretation by which the Church has been guided throughout all ages!” Where are they? What

* *Swedenborgians*, page 220.

are they? The Reformers protested altogether against the rules of interpretation adopted by the Roman Catholic Church, and protest against them to this day. It is true that the writer has the repute of protesting frequently against both; but this is only a representation *in parvo* of the present state of the Church. There is no doubt that if “the canonical rules of interpretation” be those which are the most ancient, then the method of interpretation adopted by Swedenborg is far more conformable to them than the rules which prevail in the present day. For the more ancient interpreters admitted, with Swedenborg, a series of inner senses in Scripture which the Protestant Church has altogether rejected. And again, if it be one of the “canonical rules of interpretation” first of all to ascertain the strict grammatical sense of Scripture, Swedenborg abides by it as the basis of all true interpretation. More than this what can be fairly expected of him? The Vicar admits that prophets may yet be raised up in the Church to impart the counsels of Almighty God. Will the Church have any right to say to them, in any given case, The Church understands this passage of Scripture differently from you, and therefore you are wrong? We have a law, and by our law the Church may teach you, but not you the Church? If so, it is obvious that in this case the admission that prophets may be raised up again to impart the counsels of Almighty God, amounts to nothing.

But to proceed.

Having inculcated the necessity of ascertaining the strict grammatical sense, Swedenborg elicits from this the natural, spiritual, and celestial senses. And what does the Vicar himself say of this method?*

“Here, then, we have, according to his theory, three

* *Ibid.*, page 222.

different orders of mind simultaneously accepting God's Word: first, the angels with their *celestial* mind; then men gifted with the Spirit of God in the Church, that is the *spiritual* mind; and then, again, ordinary worldly men with the mere *natural* mind. Now there is *great truth* in this idea, and *great beauty* also; for certain it is that we all do, with different minds, and even in ourselves at different times and under different circumstances, read and hear the Word of God diversely."

"All this," says the Vicar, "is no doubt a fundamental truth. But why, for that reason, *abolish* the whole of that simple yet majestic narrative of the early chapters of Genesis, and say it is an allegory?"

Abolish! Who is it that *abolishes*? He who adopts the merely literal, or he who adopts the true or internal sense? Long previously to modern geological discoveries Dr. Conyers Middleton, Librarian of Trinity College, Cambridge, thus wrote:—

"There is not a single article in this narrative of the Creation which, in its literal sense, has not puzzled all the expositors, and furnished the sceptics with perpetual topics of ridicule. In answer to whom I have never met with one advocate of the latter, either ancient or modern, who has ventured to affirm the whole to be rational and natural, or has not been forced to take shelter under allegory in one part of it or the other."

The writer in *The Old Church Porch* seems to exclude the spiritual interpretation altogether, and to advocate the literal sense alone. This did *not* Augustine and other Fathers. In the Preface to his twelve books on the literal interpretation of the first three chapters of Genesis,

* *Essay on the Allegorical Interpretation, etc., of the Creation and Fall*, p. 446.

Augustine says, . . . “The question is, whether all these things are to be understood only in a figurative sense, or to be embraced and defended by the rule of historical faith, as things which were really transacted. For that they are *not* to be understood figuratively, no Christian will dare to say who recollects that the Apostle declares how ‘*all those things happened to them in a figure* ;’ and recommends that which is written in Genesis, ‘*these two shall be one flesh*,’ as a great mystery relating to Christ and the Church.”— A similar principle of interpretation he adopts with regard to the narrative concerning the garden of Eden. Now if it be true that even where the historical sense can be maintained, the spiritual is first in point of dignity and importance, of course it follows that the historical, whether true or not, is a matter of subordinate consideration. Upon the whole, Dr. Middleton argues that the narrative concerning the Fall is allegorical ; and, says he,*

“I am the more readily induced to espouse this sense of it, from a persuasion that it is not only the most probable and rational, but the most useful also to the defence of our religion, by clearing it of those difficulties which are apt to shock and make us stumble, as it were, at the very threshold.”

It is certainly no credit to theology in the present day, that, rather than admit the spiritual sense of the first chapter of Genesis, expositors prefer to allow the question of its inspiration to remain unsettled. For that the *Divine inspiration* of the chapter may be maintained solely on the ground of its internal sense, scarcely one modern writer that we are aware of has undertaken to shew, except among the “*Swedenborgians*” so called. As to the literal sense of the first chapter of Genesis being found to be in

harmony with geological facts, as the writer affirms, it would have been well had he told us who they are who have made the discovery: be it remembered, however, that *even if it could be proved to be true, it would not in the least affect the question of the spiritual sense and its primary importance.**

We now proceed to the doctrine of the Trinity, and first of all to the title,—

SON OF GOD.

The history of discussions respecting the title *Son of God*, shews that the opinions of Tripersonalists themselves on this subject have been divided into three classes—those which assign the title to the Divinity alone, those which assign it to the Humanity alone, and those which assign it to both. The Athanasian Creed assigns it to the Divinity; the Apostles' Creed evidently to the Humanity. “It is doubted by many,” says Scott,† “who stedfastly maintain the doctrine of our Lord’s Deity, and of a Trinity of persons in the Godhead, whether the title of *the Son of God* relates to anything more than his *human* nature, his miraculous conception, and his mediatorial character and works; and the opinion of former orthodox divines on this subject seems to be given up by them as unscriptural.” The Vicar then need not have gone to Sabellians, Arians, or Socinians for his illustrations; he needed only to have appealed to Catholics themselves, in which case he might have spoken of Swedenborg as belonging to that class which regards the

* The writer who seems to approach the nearest, in the present times, to the internal sense of the Book of Genesis, is the Rev. Isaac Williams in his remarkable work on that Book.

† *Commentary*, John i. 18.

Son of God as a title belonging properly and primarily to the *humanity*. Swedenborg's doctrine is this: "The Lord is called the *Son of God* with respect to his Divine Humanity."

Take one example:—Mr. Skinner, in his *Letters to Candidates for Holy Orders*, observes: "The title, *Son of God*, is frequent in Scripture, but we have the highest authority (*Luke* i. 35) to apply it to the *human nature* of our blessed Saviour, and I can find no passage in Scripture, which decisively restricts the title *Son of God* to Deity."*

Now the Vicar does not appear to admit that the humanity of the Lord, conceived in the womb of the Virgin, is the Son of God in any sense; if he does, he has omitted the fact altogether. The reason doubtless is, that if he did so, he would be admitting that there is a Son of God which is not from all eternity—an admission which would altogether neutralize his argument against Swedenborg; for then there would be, as Swedenborg says, a Son of God who, as such, would indeed be a Divine Son, but yet not, in the language of the Creed, begotten before all worlds; and as it would be inconvenient to the Catholic faith to admit two Divine Sons, one must be omitted, which is generally done by sacrificing the sonship of the humanity to that of the Divinity; although Maldonatus, Heylin, and other Catholics affirm that the *humanity* is distinctly called the *Son of God*, not in consequence of a hypostatical union with another and eternal Son, but from being generated in the womb of the Virgin, not by man, but by God. Thus, in this respect, they confess, as Catholics, the very doctrine of Swedenborg, namely, "that the humanity of the Lord, conceived from Jehovah the Father, and born of the Virgin Mary, is the

* Vol. i., *Letter* 2, p. 7.

Son of God," according to the words of the angel, "*Therefore that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.*" The Son of God from all eternity, of which Swedenborg elsewhere speaks, and* which is the same with the Word that was made flesh, was not a Being or Person distinct from the Father, according to the common notion; but was the Divine Truth from all eternity, and as such essentially one with the Father who is Divine Good, so that Father and Son signify Essentials, not Persons.

But we proceed, in the next place, to the subject of—

THE TRINITY.

With respect to the doctrine of the *Tripersonality*, Swedenborg certainly regards it as Tritheistical. Even the Vicar observes :†—"The Catholic doctrine is, that each Person by Himself is God and Lord; and each Person by Himself and in Himself possesses every attribute of God." If this be the case, then each Person by Himself and in Himself possesses *self-existence*, for *self-existence* is one of the attributes of God: the Father possesses self-existence, the Son self-existence, the Holy Ghost self-existence; and three self-existences are declared by Bull, Waterland, Pearson, and others, to be three Gods. There is nothing unusual in the circumstance, that, in refuting the remarks of Swedenborg upon this subject, the writer should himself furnish an example of the truth of what Swedenborg has stated.

It is here, however, of the first importance to know what was the actual state of the Church in regard to this doctrine, in the very age in which Swedenborg lived.

* *Arcana Cœlestia*, art. 2803.

† *Swedenborgians*, p. 226.

In 1691 Dean Sherlock published his *Vindication of the Doctrine of the Holy and ever Blessed Trinity*, and in 1695 Bingham preached his celebrated sermon on the same subject in the University of Oxford. Sherlock and Bingham both maintained that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are Three distinct Divine Beings, Three distinct Substances, Three distinct Minds, Three distinct Spirits. Dr. South denounced this doctrine as open and avowed Tritheism: the University of Oxford confirmed his denunciation, and forbade the reading of the work within its precincts. Yet Bishop Bull afterwards declared that Dr. Sherlock advanced nothing contrary to the Fathers; and in the present day, Dr. Hook, in his *Ecclesiastical Biography*, maintains the doctrine of Mr. Bingham to be true, and finds fault with the University; for, as he says, the object of Bingham was only to state exactly the meaning of *ousia* and *substantia* as used by the Fathers; that is to say, the Catholic doctrine of the Church upon this subject, which the University of Oxford, together with Dr. South of Cambridge, had denounced as Tritheism.

So alarming was the controversy upon this subject, that it was found necessary to appeal to the Royal authority to restore peace to the Church; but one principal result of the disputation was, as is well known, materially to strengthen the cause of Socinianism.

In 1712 this formidable controversy again broke out, but in another form. It was in this year that Dr. Clarke published his *Scripture Doctrine of the Trinity*, his principal antagonist being Dr. Waterland; both of them holding the first rank as theologians in the Church of England. "I do not charge you," says Dr. Waterland,* "with asserting *two supreme Gods*; but I do charge you

* See his *Works, Life, and Writings*, vol. i., pages 64, 91.

with holding *two Gods*, one *supreme*, another *inferior*; *two* real and true *Gods*, according to the Scripture notion of the word God as explained by yourself;" in answer to which Dr. Clarke's friends retaliate by charging Dr. Waterland himself with holding *two supreme Gods*. So great was the commotion excited by this controversy, that we are told*—"it was spread abroad among all ranks and degrees of men, and the Athanasian Creed became the subject of common and ordinary conversation." Now we are informed that†—"The period in which Dr. Waterland lived was strongly marked by a spirit of hostility, not only against some peculiar doctrines of Christianity, but *against Christianity itself*. Infidelity and heresy grew and flourished together, as if of kindred natures; and the soil congenial to the one, was found to be no less favourable to the other."

Accordingly among the infidels of that day were Chubb, Morgan, Collins, Tindal, etc., who all had interested themselves in these controversies on the Tripersonality, and who united their forces against all revealed religion. Foremost among these must be placed Lord Bolingbroke, who often acted as the critic of Clarke and Waterland; and what does he say with respect to these Tripersonalist disputations?—Of the early Councils conferring on the doctrine of the Trinity he says:—

"There‡ remained, therefore, nothing to be done but to make a mystery where they found none; and having decreed that there are three Gods, to decree at the same time that there is but One; for so the Athanasian Creed must sound to every man who does not comprehend (and that is every man living) all the profound metaphysics

* Waterland's *Works, Life, and Writings*, vol. i., p. 106.

† *Ibid.*, p. 53.

‡ See his *Works*, vol. vii., pages 98, 99.

that have been employed to distinguish away the apparent contradiction," etc.

"There is but too much reason to apprehend, that these theological attempts to persuade mankind that three distinct persons in the Godhead make but one God, have induced some to believe that *there is no God at all.*" . . .

Now, Voltaire was the intimate friend of Lord Bolingbroke; and if it be true that, when he was in this country he had an interview with Dr. Clarke, he could scarcely have been ignorant of the controversy between him and Waterland. Indeed it is said of Voltaire, that so impressed was he with the freedom in this country of discussing the most sacred subjects, that it was one main cause of his subsequent opposition to the superstitions of his own country, and of his efforts to establish the reign of *Atheism.*

These circumstances will suffice to throw light upon the following statement made by Swedenborg in the *True Christian Religion*, published in the year 1771. After speaking of the Consummation of the Church, he observes :*—

"This has come to pass, in consequence of separating the Divine Trinity into three Persons, each of which is declared to be God and Lord. Hence, a sort of frenzy has infected the whole system of theology, as well as the Christian Church, so called from its Divine Founder. This disorder of the Church is called a frenzy, because men's minds are reduced by it into such a state of delirium that they do not know whether there is one God, or whether there are three. They confess but one God with their lips, while they entertain the idea of three in their thoughts; so that their lips and their minds, or their

* Art. 4.

words and their ideas, are at variance with each other, the consequence whereof is, that *they deny the existence of any God*. This is the true cause of the *Naturalism* which is now so prevalent in the world.”

We have now glanced at those historical facts which shew, that the doctrine of the Tripersonality was one principal cause of the Tritheism, Deism, and Atheism, which desolated Christendom in the century in which Swedenborg lived ; and though it is with great reluctance that we have entered into this history, yet it has been requisite so to do, in consequence of the silence of the Vicar upon this subject ; thereby leading the reader to suppose, that the mission of Swedenborg was altogether unnecessary, as there was nothing in the state of the Church to require it.

If it be asked, What has the doctrine of the Catholic Church to do with controversies between mere individuals, even though they were such men as Clarke and Waterland ? we ask in reply, What have Deism and Atheism to do with the Catholic doctrine ? Did not the controversy arise out of the doctrine, and Deism and Atheism out of the controversy ? Be it remembered, that, as Swedenborg states, in heaven every one has his place according to his idea of God.

We now proceed to the account given by the Vicar himself of his own ideas on the doctrine of the Tripersonality.

We have spoken of incomprehensible doctrines, and of the consequent necessity of external evidence to support them. The Vicar admits* that the doctrine of Three Persons in the Godhead “in some way passes our comprehension.” “There are Three Persons, and these Persons

* Page 234.

come to us distinctly: God the Father, in the work of Creation; God the Son, in the work of Redemption; and God the Holy Ghost, in the work of Sanctification."

But in regard to this doctrine, when speaking of the difficulty of deducing it from the Scripture, the Vicar himself observes, in his work on the *Distinctive Errors of Romanism*.*—

"Is it possible, my brethren, do you think, that you, or I, or any one, be he ever so gifted with the powers of man, could have deduced and invented for himself this most wondrous and mysterious doctrine out of the Bible? There is no mention of the Trinity in unity in so many direct words. That God is one, and yet three—three, and yet one—is not said in so many distinct words anywhere in the Bible. And yet it is a most vital doctrine. We have always had it in the Church. There is no creed in Christianity where it is not an article of faith. We were born to it, taught it by our parents, instructed in it by the Church, baptized into it, and believe it. How, then, do we possess it? We find it among us by TRADITION."

The author further explains in a note, that he does not mean that we could not find in Scripture the bare notion of a *threefold God*, or *triune Deity*; but that we could not find the whole doctrine of the Trinity as stated in the Nicene and Athanasian Creeds, and comprehended in the *Tripersonality*. Now this is just what the so-called "Swedenborgians" affirm,—that they can find in the Scriptures a threefold God, a Trinity in Unity; but cannot find a Tripersonal God, or three Divine Persons, each of whom, by Himself and in Himself, is God. Indeed, the Bishop of Durham, Dr. Van Mildert,† admits as much: "The doctrine of the Trinity," says he, "presents, it

* Page 77.

† Sermons, vol. i., p. 75.

must be confessed, insuperable difficulties to them who attempt to fathom its mystery.”—Be it so: yet what is the source of these difficulties?—“But they are not,” he continues, “difficulties arising out of any inherent obscurity or ambiguity in the terms by which the doctrine is propounded *in Holy Writ*; but difficulties, for the most part, of a physical or metaphysical kind, springing from a contemplation of the subject, in some point of view *not presented to us by the Scriptures.*”

The doctrine of Swedenborg is, that there is one God; that this one God is the Lord Jesus Christ; and hence, that in his Person dwells all the fulness of the Godhead bodily, viz.. the whole Divine Trinity of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. There is thus a Triune God, to whom, as already seen, the Scriptures bear witness.

We next proceed to the doctrine of—

THE HUMANITY GLORIFIED.

The question here at issue is concerning *the Relation of the Divinity to the Humanity* in the Person of Jesus Christ. On this subject we shall first state the doctrine of Swedenborg, the mention of which the Vicar has altogether omitted; and then the extraordinary inference of the Vicar.

In the work on *The New Jerusalem and its Heavenly Doctrine*,* the relation of the Divinity to the Humanity is thus laid down by Swedenborg:—

“That the Divinity and Humanity of the Lord constitute One Person, is in agreement with the faith received throughout the whole Christian world, which, in effect, is this,—that although Christ is God and Man, still He is

* Art. 288.

not two, but one Christ; one altogether by unity of Person. For as the reasonable soul and flesh is one man, so God and Man is one Christ. These are the words of the Athanasian Creed.”

This, and no other doctrine, is strictly maintained by Swedenborg throughout all his other works.

We next proceed to the extraordinary inference of the Editor:—

“Nestorius* taught that there were two persons in Jesus Christ: that the Word, Logos, or Divinity, had not become man at all, only descended upon man; only entered into the man that was born of the Blessed Virgin, so that there was a Son of Man as born of the Virgin, which was one person; and the Divine Power which descended upon Christ, which was the other person. Just so, precisely, Swedenborg: he asserts that the human flesh was born of the Blessed Virgin; but seeing that the soul of man was derived from his father, and that Jesus Christ had no human father, *it follows* that the Divine Power descended upon Him in a separate person. Thus Swedenborg is essentially a Nestorian.”

Who says *it follows*? Not Swedenborg, but the Vicar; who altogether omits the doctrine taught by Swedenborg, substitutes for it a Nestorian inference purely his own, puts it into the mouth of Swedenborg, and then charges him with heresy.

What really *follows* is not any inference, but the actual doctrine taught by Swedenborg himself, which is the same with that of the Catholic Church, which the Vicar has kept out of view; but from which it no more *follows* that Swedenborg held that Jesus Christ was two persons, than it followed that this was the doctrine of the

Athanasian Creed ; or that St. Paul made of himself two persons when he spoke of his internal and external, or inner and outer man, or of the old Adam and the new Adam ; or when he said that in his childhood he spake as a child, understood as a child, thought as a child, but when he became a man he put away childish things. Apply the like principle to the case of our Lord, and what is the result ? Let us derive it from Swedenborg's own statements, and not from any inferences ; but in so doing let us remember that the theme is as sacred as it is profound, and requires for its investigation not the Laodicean spirit, but that sincere love of truth which can humbly and earnestly breathe the prayer, " Lighten our darkness we beseech Thee, O Lord."

To proceed with Swedenborg's actual statements :—

" Jehovah,* or the Lord's internal, was the very celestial principle of love, that is, love itself, to which no other attributes can be ascribed than such as belong to pure love, consequently to pure mercy towards the whole human race ; which is of such a nature as to be desirous to save all, and make them eternally happy, and to bestow on them all things appertaining to itself ; thus, out of pure mercy, to draw all who are willing to follow, to heaven, that is, to itself, by the powerful attraction of love. This love itself is Jehovah ; nor can AM or Is be predicated of anything except this Love."

" The † Lord was conceived of Jehovah the Father, and was God from conception."

" Unless ‡ the Divinity had been in the Lord's humanity from conception, the humanity could not have been united by the Divinity itself, on account of the ardour of the infinite love in which the Divinity is."

* *Arcana Cœlestia*, art. 1735. † *Ibid.*, art. 10826. ‡ *Ibid.*, art. 6849.

“The* Divinity and Humanity of the Lord is one Person.”

“God† introduced Order at the time of Creation, and since He is Order itself, it was necessary to His actually becoming a man that He should be conceived, carried in the womb, born, educated, successively instructed in the sciences, and thus introduced to intelligence and wisdom. With respect therefore to the Humanity, he was an infant like other infants, a child like other children, and so forth ; with this difference alone, that He more rapidly, more fully, and more perfectly than others, accomplished the different stages of that progression. That he thus advanced according to Order, is evident from these words in *Luke* : “ And the child Jesus grew, and waxed strong in spirit, and increased in wisdom and stature,” etc. That he advanced more rapidly, more fully, and more perfectly than others, is evident from the account of him given in the same Evangelist ; as that when he was twelve years old, they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, and asking them questions ; and all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers.”

“In‡ the internal sense of the Word, the Lord’s whole life is described, such as it was about to be in the world, even as to perceptions and thoughts ; for those things were foreseen and provided, as being from the Divine principle. . . . With respect to the essential life of the Lord’s humanity, it was a continual progression of the human principle to the Divine, even to absolute union ; for in order that he might fight with the hells and overcome them, it was necessary that he should fight from a human principle, inasmuch as there can be no combat with the

* *Arcana Cœlestia*, art. 10824. † *True Christian Religion*, art. 89.

‡ *Arcana Cœlestia*, art. 2523.

hells from the Divine alone. Therefore he was pleased to put on the human and be like another man, and so to be an infant as another, and to grow up into sciences and knowledges—thus, as another man, to cultivate the rational principle and thereby dissipate the shade thereof, and introduce it into light, and thus of himself and by his own power. That the Lord's progression from the human to the Divine was such, can be doubted by no one who only considers, that he was an infant and learned to speak as an infant; but there was this difference between the Lord and other men, that the essential Divine principle was in Him, as being conceived of Jehovah."

"As* to what in general concerns the Lord's instruction, the nature and manner thereof are plainly discoverable from Genesis, chap. xx, in the internal sense; wherein it appears, that it was effected by continual revelations, and thus by Divine perceptions and thoughts from Himself, that is, from His Divine principle: these perceptions and thoughts he implanted in his Divine intelligence and wisdom, and this even to the perfect union of his human principle with his Divine. This way of becoming wise is not possible to be conferred on man; inasmuch as it was an influx from the Divine itself, which was the Lord's inmost principle, as appertaining to the Father of whom he was conceived; consequently proceeding from essential Divine love, which the Lord alone possessed, and which consisted in a desire to save the whole human race."

"Truth† adjoined to good is intellectual truth in a genuine sense; but truth rational is beneath it, consequently inferior. Rational truth is born of sciences and knowledges (*cognitiones*) vivified by an affection corres-

* *Arcana Cœlestia*, art. 2500.

† *Ibid.*, art. 1895, 1496.

ponding to them. This affection, inasmuch as it is of the exterior man, ought to be in subservience to intellectual truth, which appertains to the inmost man, as a handmaid serves her mistress."

"Scientifics* and knowledges (*cognitiones*) acquired by learning are not truths, but are only recipient vessels. Thus whatever is contained in a man's memory is anything but truth, though it is called such; but truth resides therein, as in its vessels. These vessels were to be formed by the Lord, or rather opened, by instruction in knowledges (*cognitionibus*) from the Word; not only that things celestial might be insinuated therein, but that these knowledges might become celestial and thus Divine; for the Lord joined the Divine Essence to the Human, that his human attributes might also become Divine."

"The† rational principle first conceived in the human mind cannot acknowledge as truth, intellectual or spiritual truth; because there adhere to it many fallacies originating in sciences received from the world and from nature; together with appearances derived from knowledges collected from the literal sense of the word which are not truths. . . . With the Lord, however, there were no fallacies; but when his rational principle was first conceived, there were appearances of truth which were not in themselves truths. Hence, also, his rational principle, at its first conception, lightly esteemed intellectual truth; but in proportion as the rational principle became divine, the clouds of appearances were successively dispersed, and intellectual truths were displayed to him in their own light. The Lord Himself did not lightly esteem truth intellectual, but he perceived and saw that it was his newly-formed rational principle that lightly esteemed it."

* *Arcana Cœlestia*, art. 1469.

† *Ibid.*, art. 1911.

“In* general there are intellectual things of faith, there are rational things of faith, and there are scientific things of faith; they thus succeed each other, and proceed in order from interiors to exteriors. The things of faith, which are inmost, are called intellectual; the things thence proceeding are called rational; the things, again, proceeding thence are the scientifics of faith. These things are comparatively, to use the language of the learned, as what is prior to what is posterior, or what is the same thing, as what is superior to what is inferior, that is, as what is interior to what is exterior.”

“In† respect to the Lord, his internal was Jehovah Himself; inasmuch as He was conceived of Jehovah, who cannot be divided and become another’s, as the internal of man is, in the case of a son who is conceived of a human father; for what is Divine is not capable of division, like what is human, but is one and the same, and is permanent. With this internal the Lord united the human essence; and as the internal of the Lord was Jehovah, it was not a form recipient of life, as the internal of man, but was life itself. His human essence, also, by union, was in like manner made life; wherefore the Lord so often saith that He is life, as in John:—‘As the Father hath life in Himself so hath He given to the Son to have life in Himself’ (chap. v. 26, not to mention other passages in the same Evangelist. as chap. i. 4, 21; vi. 33, 35, 48; xi. 25). In proportion, therefore, as the Lord was in the humanity which he received hereditarily from the mother, he appeared distinct from Jehovah, and adored Jehovah as a Being different from himself; but in proportion as he put off this humanity, the Lord was not distinct from Jehovah, but one with Him. The former state was the Lord’s

* *Arcana Cœlestia*, art. 2504; see also art. 1904.

† *Ibid.*, art. 1999.

state of humiliation, but the latter was His state of glorification.”

“The* rational principle in the Lord was conceived by the internal man, and was born of the exterior man as a mother. Whatsoever was derived from the exterior man had with it an hereditary tendency, consequently it also had evil. This was what the Lord by his own proper power conquered, subdued, and expelled, till at length he made his rational principle Divine. . . . The intellectual principle which appertained to the Lord, was that from which He thought, and by which He had rule over the rational principle, and also over the natural which belonged to the exterior man. He whose thought is from intellectual truth, and whose perception is from Divine good (which also was the Lord's, as being the Father's, for *He had no other soul*), must needs act from his own proper power; wherefore, as by His own proper power he subdued and cast out hereditary evil, He also, by His own proper power, united the human essence to the Divine; for the one is a consequence of the other. He who is conceived of Jehovah hath no other internal, that is, *no other soul*, than Jehovah; wherefore as to his veriest life, He was Jehovah Himself. Jehovah, or the Divine essence, cannot be divided like the soul of a human father from which an offspring is conceived.”

“The† Lord made divine all that was human appertaining to Him, by His own proper power. Thus, He not only made the rational principle divine, but also the interior and exterior sensual principle, and consequently the very body itself: thus He united the humanity with the Divinity. That not only the rational principle, but also the sensual, and consequently the whole body was made Divine, and

* *Arcana Cœlestia*, art. 1921.

† *Ibid.* art. 2083.

Jehovah, may appear to every one from this consideration ; that the Lord alone rose from the dead as to His body, and that He sits at the right hand of Divine Power, both as to all His Divinity and all His humanity. To sit at the right hand of Divine Power signifies to have all power in heaven and earth.”

“It* is the Lord’s Divine human principle which illuminates both the sight and understanding of the spiritual ; which would not be the case had not the Lord united the human essence to the Divine ; and unless this union had been effected, neither man in the world, nor spiritual angels in heaven, would have had any intellectual and perceptive principle of good and of truth ; of course neither would they have had any principle of blessedness and happiness, consequently nothing of salvation. Hence it may appear that mankind could not have been saved unless the Lord had assumed the humanity and glorified it.”

“It† is believed at this day that the Lord, as to His humanity, not only was, but also is, the son of Mary ; but in this the Christian world is under a great mistake. That He was the son of Mary is true ; but that He is so still is not true ; for by acts of redemption he put off the humanity which he derived from the mother, and put on a humanity from the Father, in consequence of which the humanity of the Lord is Divine, and in Him God is Man and Man is God. That He put off the humanity from the mother, and put on a humanity from His Father, is evident from this circumstance—that He himself never called Mary his *mother*.”

These extracts from the *Arcana Cœlestia* and *True Christian Religion* we conclude with the following remarks :

* *Arcana Cœlestia*, art. 2776.

† *True Christian Religion*, art. 102.

“The* angels are in the enjoyment of their delights, yea, of their beatitudes and felicities, when they think of the Lord, of His divine and human principle, and of the human how it was made divine; for at such times they are encompassed about with a celestial and spiritual sphere which is full of the Lord, so that it may be said that they are in the Lord. Hence nothing is in them more blessed and more happy than to think agreeably to the things appertaining to that sphere and to the affections thence derived.”

“But these things, which are so precious to the angels, are to men as things of no importance, being above their comprehension, consequently in the shade of their understanding. And, on the other hand, those things which are precious in the eyes of men, as are the things connected with this world, are of no importance to the angels, being beneath their state, consequently in the shade of their wisdom. Thus, what is surprising, the things which fall into shade with men and are almost objects of his contempt, pass into light with the angels and enter into their affection; as is the case with several other things appertaining to the internal sense of the Word.”

REDEMPTION.

We next proceed to the doctrine of *Redemption by the Blood of Christ* as taught by Swedenborg; and as he contrasts it with the doctrine generally received in his day, we shall first point out, in his own words, what this doctrine was:—

“It† is believed by the generality within the Church,

* *Arcana Cœlestia*, art. 2551.

† *Ibid.*, art. 10,659.

that the Lord came into the world that He might reconcile the Father by the Passion of the Cross, and that afterwards they were accepted for whom He interceded; also, that He exempted man from damnation by this, that He alone fulfilled the law which otherwise would have damned every one, and thus that all were saved who held this faith with confidence and trust."

The popular idea was that God the Father was wrathful and angry with mankind, and that He would not be appeased except by the blood and death of His Son; and as this took place upon the Cross, so the Passion of the Cross was called the one exclusive and meritorious act of "Redemption by Blood."

The same kind of interpretation of "Redemption by blood" is maintained by the Editor, who says, that in the Law of Moses Almighty God sets Himself forth as one ready to be *appeased*, and that—"If we take away the idea either of God's* *wrath* against sin, or the possibility of his ceasing from *wrath*, we should take away the foundation of God's moral government of the universe, as well as the keystone of His revelation." Accordingly he maintains, that this was the principle upon which sacrifices, under the Jewish dispensation, were offered by the Jews. If we ask in what sense *wrath* is thus ascribed to the Deity? the Editor replies: † "We only use the terms God's benevolence, love, hatred, *wrath*, justice, and the like, *in the same manner* ‡ as we do when we apply even the bodily parts of man to Him—face, finger, countenance,

* Page 243.

† Page 241.

‡ Bishop Browne objects to this medley of good and evil qualities, as if they were all attributable to God by one and the same kind of direct analogy. *Divine Analogy*, p. 444, etc.

and the like.”—The same manner! If we ask what manner that is, we are left in the dark, although it is here the one question at issue. Bishop Browne, however, the most approved writer upon this subject, thus enlightens us:—

“When* we attribute fingers, and eyes, and ears to God, the terms are purely *metaphorical*, since it is manifest, from reason and Scripture, that there can be nothing in the nature of a pure spirit similar and answerable to our senses and bodies.”

What, then, upon this principle, is the meaning of the term *wrath*, as applied to God? The term, as here explained, is purely *metaphorical*. In this case we have a metaphorical wrath, metaphorically appeased by a metaphorical redemption; the only reality in all this process being that of material blood and penal suffering. We must, therefore, take the term *wrath* either in a strictly literal sense, or in a metaphorical sense, or it may be affirmed that the literal sense means the metaphorical.

On the other hand, Bishop Butler seemed to have been by no means satisfied with the prevalent explanations, and preferred waiting till it might please God that more light should be thrown upon the subject. Speaking of the efficacy of sacrifice for obtaining the pardon of sin, the Bishop observes, A.D. 1736:—

“How* and in what particular way it had this effect, there are not wanting persons who have endeavoured to explain, but I cannot find that the Scripture has explained it. We seem to be *very much in the dark* concerning the manner in which the ancients understood atonement to be made, that is, pardon to be made by sacrifice. And if the Scripture has, as surely it has, left the matter of the satisfaction of Christ mysterious, left somewhat in it unre-

* *Divine Analogy*, p. 449.

† *Analogy*, part ii., chap. v., sect. 6.

vealed, all conjectures about it must be, if not evidently absurd, yet at least uncertain.”

It was while the doctrines of Redemption and Atonement were thus lying in suspense between metaphorical and sensuous explication on the one hand, and inexplicable mystery on the other, that Swedenborg writes as follows :—

“In* many passages in the Word we find anger, wrath, and vengeance attributed to God; and it is said that he punishes, casts into hell, and tempts, with many other expressions of a similar nature. Now, when this is believed in a childlike simplicity, and made the ground of the fear of God and of care not to offend Him, no man incurs condemnation by such a simple belief. But when a man *confirms* himself in such notions so as to be persuaded that anger, wrath, vengeance, vindictiveness, and consequently passions which originate in evil, belong to God, and that He punishes mankind and casts them into hell under the influence of such anger, wrath, and vengeance; in this case his belief is condemnatory, because he has destroyed the genuine truth, which teaches that God is love itself, mercy itself, and goodness itself, and that being these, He cannot be angry, wrathful, or revengeful. Where such evil passions, then, are attributed in the Word to God, it is owing to the *appearance* only: such things are but *appearances* of truth.”

“That the Sun moves is an apparent truth, but that it does not move is a genuine truth; nevertheless, every one speaks according to apparent truth, saying that the Sun rises and sets; and this, indeed, is allowable, because it is impossible to use any other mode of expression; but to *think* in conformity with such a mode of expression, that

* *True Christian Religion*, art. 256, 257.

the fact is really so, and to confirm such a thought, this dulls and darkens the rational understanding.”

We thus see that, in the case of things natural, the *apparent* truth is directly opposite to the *real* truth, and that what is attributed to the Sun belongs not to the Sun but to the earth. The case is the same in regard to things spiritual, in which that is sometimes attributed to God which belongs only to man; as when it is said God is *wrathful*, while, on the contrary, He is love itself. Hence, on the words, “He that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the *wrath* of God abideth on him,” and other like passages, Swedenborg observes :

“By* the *wrath* of Jehovah is not signified wrath, but the opposite of wrath; thus mercy and clemency. That Jehovah hath not any wrath is evident from this, that He is love itself, good itself, and mercy itself; and that wrath is the opposite of these, and is also an infirmity which cannot possibly belong to God. Wherefore, when *wrath*, in the Word, is predicated of Jehovah or the Lord, the angels perceive not wrath but mercy, or the removal of the evil from heaven. . . . The reason why *wrath* is attributed in the Word to Jehovah, is, because it is a most general truth that all things come from God, thus, both evil and good; but this most general truth, which is intended for infants, children, and the simple-minded, ought afterwards to receive illustration, namely, of this kind—that all evils are from man, and only *appear* as if they came from God; and, that it is so said to the intent that persons of this class may learn to fear God, and not perish by the evils which they do, and that afterwards they may love Him—for fear must precede love—to the intent that in love there may be holy fear; for when fear

* *Arcana Cælestia*, art. 6997.

is insinuated into love it becomes holy from the holy principle of love ; and in such a case, it is not a fear of the Lord's anger and of punishment, but lest they should act against essential good, because this will torment the conscience. Moreover, the Israelites and Jews were driven to observe the statutes and precepts in the external form by *punishments* ; and hence they believed that Jehovah was angry and punished, when yet they themselves induced such things by their own idolatry : hence, by anger, wrath, fury, fire, are meant the punishments and damnations into which man casts himself when he casts himself into evils."

From these words it is evident that the *apparent* truth is that God is wrathful, while the *real* truth is that God is merciful, and that the apparent truth is opposite to the real truth. The apparent truth is for children, and in their minds gives rise to a childlike theology ; the real truth is for those who have put away childish things, and having arrived at an age of understanding, take a rational view of Christian doctrine. In other words, in young children the doctrine that God is wrathful is childlike, in old children it is childish. According to this account, the theology on this subject in *The Old Church Porch* is the theology of those whose judgment is not sufficiently matured to put away childish things ; and who, unhappily, as they grow older, so far from becoming wiser, make use of their childish ideas to condemn the maturer thoughts of a riper age. Let us take, for instance, the case of "penal suffering."

"Penal suffering" is suffering endured in the way of punishment. The punishment is said to be that of sin imputed by God the Father to Christ as our substitute ; the punishment being, after this imputation, the consequence of the Father's wrath, and the merit of Christ consisting

in the endurance of these sufferings for the purpose of appeasing the Father. No doubt a rejection of these sensuous conceptions of the doctrine of "penal suffering" involves a rejection of the like conceptions of our Lord's merit in enduring them; and because this is the only way in which a childish theology understands the subject, so it naturally complains, that in rejecting such a doctrine the merit of our Lord is alike rejected, and that if expiation is effected it is only by the supposed merit of a man's own works. This, at least, is the charge against Swedenborg brought forward by the Editor:—

"From* denying the fact of penal suffering existing in the Passion of Christ, the transition is easy to a denial of its *merit*. The one follows the other." And then, after stating, as a necessary consequence of this error, the doctrine that "a man's sins may be forgiven on some grounds of work in the way of expiation performed by himself;" and after superfluously citing passages from Scripture to shew that this cannot be the case, the Editor concludes with the following words: "To what end is all this, if, after all, the Blood of Christ is not our Redemption, and the Passion of Christ not meritorious?"—"We need not, surely, stop any longer to discuss so grievous a heresy as this. If we tolerate it for an instant we drop immediately into the worst tenets either of Pelagianism or Socinianism. By the former we assert the possibility of man's salvation on merits of his own, which is to say that man can be sinless. By the latter we sweep away the whole essence of the Person of Christ, perfect God and perfect Man, and make Him as one of ourselves."

After this effusion let us refer to the works of Swedenborg himself, and see how far they deny *merit* to the Lord

* *The Swedenborgians*, p. 247.

and ascribe merit to man, as the Editor here asserts. The following are the statements of Swedenborg :—

“The* Lord alone hath *merit*, because He alone, from Himself, conquered the hells and subdued them. Hence the Lord alone IS MERIT and justice.”

“They† who place *merit* in works, cannot fight against the evils which are from the hells, for no one can do this from himself; but, in the case of those who do not place merit in works, the Lord fights for them and conquers.”

“They‡ *merit* of our Lord the Saviour is redemption, which consisted in the subjugation of the hells, the orderly arrangement of the heavens, and the subsequent restoration of the Church; thus redemption was a work purely divine. . . . If, then, redemption was a work purely Divine, a work of the Lord alone, and if this constitutes His *merit*, it follows that it can no more be applied, ascribed, or imputed to any man than the creation and preservation of the universe; for redemption was a kind of creation of the angelic heaven anew, and also of the Church.”

We have now seen by what kind of sorcery in *The Old Church Porch*, the doctrines of Swedenborg have been transformed into their very opposite. But to proceed :—

“*The Passion of the Cross*,” says Swedenborg, “was the last combat§ and plenary victory by which the Redeemer subjugated the hells, and by which he glorified his humanity.” But—

“Inasmuch as it is said, ‘Thou hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood,’ and this is understood within the Church altogether according to the sense of the letter, and not according to any spiritual sense, I am desirous to shew,

* *Arcana Cælestia*, art. 9979.

† *Ibid.*, art. 9978.

‡ *True Christian Religion*, art. 640.

§ *Apocalypse Explained*, art. 328, 329.

that by *blood* is not understood *blood* (in the merely literal sense), or the Lord's Passion upon the Cross (in the merely literal sense), but the Divine truth proceeding from the Lord, and the reception thereof by man; consequently that by—*Thou hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood*, is signified that He has reclaimed to Himself, and liberated from Hell, those who acknowledge Him and receive Divine truth from Him.”

Accordingly,* on the words—“*These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb,*” Swedenborg observes:—“In the literal sense of the Word, by the ‘blood of the Lamb,’ is signified the Passion of the Cross; but in the internal or spiritual sense is understood the Divine Truth proceeding from the Lord; for it is by this that man is purified from falses and evils, that is, by this his garments are made white,” or by this falsities are put off and truths put on.

“From† these observations it may be seen, how much the literal sense of the Word differs from the spiritual sense; likewise how the Word is falsified if it is viewed outwardly only, and not at the same time inwardly. The difference between these senses may appear from this consideration; that by ‘the blood of the Lamb,’ in the literal sense, is understood the Lord's Passion of the Cross; but in the spiritual sense, the Divine Truth proceeding from the Lord's Divine Humanity. Wherefore, if (in Rev. xii. 11) it should be assumed for the *real* truth, that Michael conquered the Dragon by the Lord's Passion of the Cross, it would hence follow that the Lord thereby took away all the sins of the world, and also thereby moved His Father to compassion for mankind; when notwithstanding, these

* *Apocalypse Explained*, art. 476.

† *Ibid.*, art. 748.

ideas do not agree with the Divine Truth which is with the angels in heaven, nor with the genuine understanding of truth. Who can ever understand that the Lord, by the Passion of the Cross, took away all the sins of the world ; when, nevertheless, every man's quality after death is according to what his life was in the world ; and they who do evil go into hell, and they who do good go into heaven ? Who can also understand that God the Father was moved to compassion or mercy by the blood of His Son on the Cross, and that He had any need of such means, when notwithstanding, He is in himself mercy itself, love itself, and goodness itself ? From such considerations it is evident that the Word, in this passage and in a thousand others, must be *falsified* if it be viewed outwardly only, and not at the same time inwardly. To view it outwardly is to view it from the letter ; but to view it inwardly is to view it from the doctrine of genuine truth. If, therefore, it is believed from doctrine, that the Lord subjugated the hells, and at the same time glorified His humanity by temptations, and that the Passion of the Cross was the last temptation and full victory by which He subjugated the hells, and at the same time glorified his humanity, it falls under the understanding, and thence into the faith, and the result is this—that it is an *apparent* truth that Michael conquered by the Passion of the Cross, but a *real* truth that he conquered by Divine Truth proceeding from the Divine Humanity of the Lord. But if the *apparent* truth be taken instead of the *real* truth, and *confirmed*, the Word is then *falsified*.”

Falsifications of the Word are, as we have seen, confirmations of apparent truth in the place of real truth. Moreover we observe, that the general popular interpretation of “Redemption by Blood” is founded on the same

principle as popular interpretations of the Second Advent, which, also, are falsifications of the Word; as when it is taught, "that* at the Day of the Last Judgment the Lord will come literally in the clouds of heaven; that the sun and moon will then withdraw their light; that the stars will fall from heaven; that the earth with the mundane system, will perish, and a new creation of all things will then take place; beside other things of like nature, which are truths of the literal sense of the Word, but which become falsities, if they are not at the same time perceived from an enlightened understanding."

Thus much as to *apparent* truth and *real* truth in regard to the doctrine of Redemption by Blood. The apparent truth, which is that of *The Old Church Porch*, is for children; the real truth is for those who have put away childish things; but if, in the manhood of the mind, childish things are not put away, they become sources of falsifications of the real truth, which yet are maintained in *The Old Church Porch* to be the real Catholic doctrine, both as regards the Passion of the Cross, Redemption by Blood, and the Second Advent of our Lord.

Let us now see how apparent truths have entered into the doctrine of the Atonement, instead of real truth; and how eminent theologians in the Church of England have shrunk from the consequent explanations of that doctrine.

THE ATONEMENT.

On this subject the Editor observes,† that Swedenborg "did not recognize the NECESSITY of any personal suffering

* *Apocalypse Explained*, art. 719.

† Page 342.

of the Son of God upon the cross, or allow that men had forfeited the love of God ; and that God's wrath lay upon the soul of every man until their pardon was granted, and that their pardon **COULD NOT** be granted except by the propitiatory sacrifice of His only-begotten Son." The Editor regards Swedenborg as a sad heretic for not admitting this kind of doctrine to be true. Would it not, however, have been more prudent to look at home before pronouncing this sentence ?

Archbishop Magee, in his *Treatise on the Atonement*,* observes ; that "Men **COULD NOT** have been forgiven unless Christ had suffered to purchase their forgiveness, is no part of the doctrine of the Atonement, as held by the Church of England. What God *could* or *could not* have done it presumes not to pronounce. What God declares he has done that merely it asserts ; and on His express word alone it is founded." For this reason it is that the Archbishop objects to speaking of the *necessity* of personal suffering, and says, "That the word *necessary* is imprudently used by Dr. Clarke and others I readily admit ;" so that if the foregoing statement of the Editor be true upon this point (according to Archbishop Magee), Swedenborg is really more orthodox than the Editor himself.

What follows is equally remarkable.

The Editor speaks of the Atonement as if the Father were in a state of wrath, indignation, anger, nay, even fierce anger, with mankind ; and as if the Atonement were the work of pacifying, appeasing, and thus propitiating the Father, who is made placable or propitiated by the Son's endurance of punishment in the place of the sinner. Now Archbishop Magee observes :† "The first and most important of the objections we have now to consider, is that

* Page 188.

† Page 21.

which represents the doctrine of the Atonement as founded on the Divine implacability ; inasmuch as it supposes that to appease the rigid justice of God it was requisite that punishment should be inflicted, and that, consequently, the sinner *could not* by any means have been released, had not Christ suffered in his stead."

This, as far as we can judge, is the doctrine of the Atonement advocated by the writer in *The Old Church Porch*, and to which Swedenborg considers there is just ground for objection. Now what does the Archbishop say ? " Were this a faithful statement of the doctrine of the Atonement, there had indeed been just ground for the objection ;" indeed, he does not hesitate to say, that such a representation of the Atonement is calumniating the doctrine.

The truth is, what is the real connexion between the death of Christ and the forgiveness of sin, Archbishop Magee did not profess to know, any more than Bishop Butler :* " I know not, nor does it concern me to know, in what manner the sacrifice of Christ is connected with the forgiveness of sin ;" this, says he, " is the language of the Christian."—" Neither the sacrifice nor the intercession has, as far as we can comprehend, any efficacy whatever. All that we can know of the one or the other is, that it has been *appointed* as the means by which God has determined to act with respect to man." This being the case, the Atonement is a Divine work concerning the real nature of which, after all, very little is known by the Catholic Church : there is, according to his Grace, no discoverable connexion between the death of Christ and the forgiveness of sin. Why not ? Because the Atonement is regarded as a transaction between two Divine

Persons rather than between the Person of Christ and mankind.

According to Swedenborg, the powers of Hell had intervened between heaven and earth so as to intercept, like a cloud, the rays of Divine Love and Wisdom descending into the human mind. It was requisite, therefore, that these powers should be removed and remitted to their own kingdom, before the Spirit of truth could descend to man. It was the Lord alone that could effect this work ; and this He did through the medium of the *humanity*, in and by which He placed Himself in contact with the legions of Hell. In doing this He passed through states of unspeakable trial and temptation ; but every victory over the infernal influx was a progress in the work of the glorification of the manhood, which continued till it ended in the perfect union of the Humanity and Divinity ; so that from the Divine Humanity there could be an efflux of the Spirit of Truth into the minds of mankind ; pointing out the nature of evil and error, convicting the conscience, producing repentance, enabling men to put away their evils, renounce their errors, and thus to obtain remission of sins.

The Passion of the Cross was the last temptation of this kind, the last struggle with the powers of darkness ; it was the principal struggle, but not the *only* one, and therefore it was not *alone* Redemption : the whole of our Saviour's life was one continued conflict with the powers of darkness, and therefore the whole of his life, and not his death on the cross *alone*, was concerned in the work of Redemption and Atonement. We thus see the connexion between the life and death of Christ (not his death only), and the forgiveness of sin. Now the *humanity* is frequently called in Scripture "*the arm of Jehovah ;*" and

as there is no possibility of a man working without hands or arms, so Swedenborg observes there was no other method by which the omnipotence of God COULD effect His purposes, than by assuming the humanity; and he further shews how that humanity was finally made perfect through suffering. As then, according to Dr. Magee, there is no perceptible connexion between the death of Christ and the forgiveness of sins, so, this being the case, he denies the right of any orthodox divine to say what God *could* or *could not* do, or to use the word *necessary*, in relation to the Atonement.

On the other hand, Swedenborg, pointing out the connexion between the life and death of Christ and the forgiveness of sin, is so far entitled to use these terms as he has done: and thus we have shewn that in regard to the use of the terms alluded to, the Editor has stated the case upside down. To conclude, however, this part of the subject, we cannot help thinking that if the writer of *The Old Church Porch* had resolved the *wrath of God* into "*judicial disapprobation*," as Archbishop Magee has done, he would have made a step in advance towards a better knowledge of the Atonement.

The next doctrine which is brought before us is that concerning—

DEATH.

A New Church writer speaks of *death* as, in one sense, not being a *curse*; and the Editor of *The Old Church Porch* observes:* "Here not only the fact of any material resurrection is denied, but the novel doctrine of death not being a curse is superadded; whereas we have been usually

* Page 357.

taught that if ever anything was a curse, if ever Almighty God did say that the punishment brought into the world by Adam's transgression was a curse, that curse was manifested by death; for so it is said, in Gen. iii., '*Cursed is the ground for thy sake: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.*'"

The writer advances this argument against "Swedenborgians," as he calls them, as if they denied that death was a curse, whereas *they do no such thing*. They, too, admit that death is a curse; but the question is, *What death?* the death of the material body, or the death of the spirit—that is to say, natural death, or spiritual death? It is remarkable that the writer takes no notice of spiritual death, the death of the body seeming to him to absorb every other consideration. Now the *death* which is signified by the return to dust is the same concerning which our first parents had been warned—"In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." In that day Adam did not die as to the material body, but he was deprived of that life which he had derived from eating of the tree of life, and the privation of that life was the death referred to. The *dust* to which Adam was to return was the same which the serpent was to eat; and even the Fathers tell us, that this *dust* signifies worldly, sensuous, external things. Before any argument, however, against Swedenborg can be derived from this text, the question must first be settled concerning the right method of interpreting the first three chapters of Genesis. In the meantime it may be well to observe, that on 1 Cor. xv. 36, it is said by Theophylact, Theodoret, and Œcumenius, that were there no death there would be no resurrection. "Nor," says Bloomfield, "did this escape the acute penetration of Locke, whose words are these: 'The apostle answers that it is *fit* that

men should die, death being no improper way to the attainment of other bodies.' Truly no more improper, nor at all different from that mode which is pursued in *the vegetable world*."—Is death, then, in the vegetable world, a curse?

We proceed, in the next place, to the subject of—

THE NATURAL BODY AND THE SPIRITUAL BODY.

In order to prove the Resurrection of the *Body, i.e.*, the material body, the writer wishes to shew that it is the same with the resurrection of the *man*; and his argument is this:—

“Now* surely if man is man at all, he possesses first, as *essential* to the nature of man, a body; for it was in a body that Almighty God was pleased to create him, the sacred historian especially saying, ‘In the image of God created he him;’ and then, secondly, as *superadded* to the body, there is his spirit or soul; for God ‘breathed into his nostrils the breath of life.’ Body, therefore, and soul together constitute the perfect human form, and its *essence* cannot exist without the conjunction of the two. And yet we are told by the Swedenborgians that ‘the perfect human form has no material body.’”

Are we to understand here, or are we not, that the material body is *essential* to the nature of man, and that the spirit or soul is only a *superaddition*?

That the material body is *essential* to the nature of man the writer indeed affirms, but it is notoriously the doctrine of materialists; and, therefore, from this principle they logically conclude, that when death turns the body

* *Swedenborgians*, p. 254.

into dust, the man himself dies, and there is an end of him. If, therefore, Sadducean doctrines are on the increase in the present day, are we not here supplied with one of the main causes to which to refer them; since unbelievers in a future state can appeal to alleged Catholic doctrine in their support? for it cannot be said, if the material body be *essential* to man as man, that when the material body dies the *man* survives. It is of no use to say that Christ died in order to restore the material body to life; for that restoration can take place only at some future unknown period, when the alleged resurrection of the body is to take place; in the meantime God is the God of the *dead*, not of the living. Well might it be asked,—“Our fathers, where are they?”—Wherever they are, or whatever they are, if they are anywhere, or anything, upon the foregoing principle they have ceased to be human, or to have either bodies or senses. Fathers, mothers, brothers, sisters, husbands, and wives, having once departed this life, have become spiritual nobodies.

But the Editor thus proceeds:—

“Then* again we are told (by Swedenborg) that in the Resurrection, man, although not having any material body, for that is considered impossible, still will find himself possessing all the senses and powers proper to a man. Now what are the senses proper to a man? If a man be a spirit only; if all that is man is his soul, then we can imagine a creation, such as the Angelic order, which may have *senses without a body*; but if we know and are perfectly assured that the senses proper to a man are the *senses of his body*, that is, smell, touch, hearing, sight, then the senses proper to a man cannot exist without his body. But here we are told with one voice there is no

* *Ibid.*, p. 255.

material body in the Resurrection ; and with another, that a man in the Resurrection has all the senses and powers proper to a man ! Such, alas, are the absurdities of those who strive, in the enlightenment of philosophy, to explain or define the doctrines of faith."

In these remarks it is clear, that by the term *body* is intended the *material* body ; and by *senses*, the senses proper to this body, that is to say, the bodily or corporeal senses ; and the writer is labouring to prove that one who is the pastor of an important parish, is endowed indeed with outward bodily senses, but that as to internal *spiritual senses* he has none ; in fine, that he has only one set of senses, viz., those of the material body, and that as to his spirit he is blind, deaf, and insensible ; and he seems rather disconcerted at us for assuring him that it is not so, and that we have good reason to hope that on a little reflection he will come, notwithstanding what he says, to his *spiritual senses*.

In venturing to suggest the mode of enquiry after them, we would ask him, Did he never reflect upon the meaning of that passage in the Epistle to the Hebrews, chap. v. 14 : " Strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who, by reason of use, have their *senses* exercised to discern both good and evil ?"—Does the Vicar imagine that these *senses* are the *senses of the material body* ? The term used is *æstheteria*, which signifies organs or instruments of sensation and perception : " So the *æstheterion* of *seeing*," Parkhurst observes, " is the eye ; of *hearing*, the ear ; but in the New Testament it is used only for the *internal senses* or *senses of the soul*, corresponding to those outward ones of the body."—" In like manner," says Grotius on this passage, " as in the external man the tongue, palate, nostrils, indicate what

things are good and what are bad, and this the more accurately the more they are exercised; so, also, the *interior man* has his *organs of sense*, by means of which, when any mystical meaning of Scripture is set before him, he easily judges whether it is right or wrong from the nature of the Gospel itself, and of the respective dispensations; and he prepares mankind to receive it in its due season."

"By *senses*," says De Lyra on this passage, "are sometimes designated the intellectual powers; as when we say to a person, Do you *see* this? that is to say, Do you *understand* it?"—Hence he observes that—"the true is the good of the intellect, and the false the evil of the same; that the mysteries of faith may be set before us in two ways; the first, that in which they are simply believed, which is the faith of the simple, corresponding to the milk given to babes; the second, that in which they are *understood* by *reason*, which is the strong meat received only by the intelligent, and those who are well versed in the Scriptures." The former, or the simple, he says, "have their *spiritual senses* but little exercised, and are always liable to be misled; the latter have their spiritual senses well strengthened by exercise."—These, according to *The Old Church Porch*, would be the Rationalists and Gnostics of Christianity; but the Apostle commended them, nevertheless, as being a very different class of persons.

"There is something in the soul," says another Commentator* on the same passage, "that answers to all these senses in the body. And as universal nature presents to the other senses their different and appropriate objects, so religion presents to *these interior senses* the

* Adam Clarke.

objects which are suited to them. Hence, in Scripture, we are said, even in spiritual things, to *see, hear, taste, smell, touch, and feel*. These are the means by which the soul is rendered comfortable, and through which it derives its happiness and perfection."

Indeed, it was to one of these very senses that the Apostle was thus referring in this very chapter,—“Of whom we have many things to say and hard to be uttered, seeing ye are dull of *hearing*; *i. e.*, says a Commentator, they were so much wedded to the externalities of their own religion that “they received with difficulty, and but tardily the explication of the mysteries of the new law.”

The Apostle further says to the Philippians, i. 9: “And this I pray that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge, and in all *judgment*,” *i. e.*, as it is in the original, *æsthesis*, sense, discernment by means of the spiritual senses. Hence, also, he speaks of the natural man not knowing the things of the Spirit of God, because they are spiritually discerned; also, upon the same principle, of the discernment of spirits; of the duty of trying the spirits whether they be of God; and, in general, of the necessity of exercising the spiritual senses in order to enable us to see, and hear, and understand, and form a right judgment. Now the Editor has engaged in a task of this kind in relation to the “Swedenborgians,” and he gives them to understand that while he does so, he, himself, is not in possession of any of these *spiritual senses*; which, if it were so, would of course account for what he has written. That angels should have senses without a material body we can imagine; but that angels should have senses *without any body at all*, is what, with all our philosophic enlightenment, we can neither imagine, nor define, nor explain; and though, according to the Editor,

it be one of "*the doctrines of faith*," yet Swedenborg will tell him that the angels are as much at a loss to comprehend such a doctrine as we are.

With these remarks we proceed to the next subject, viz., that of—

THE RESURRECTION OF THE BODY.

The Editor says,* "The doctrine of the Church is distinctly and emphatically this: that there will be a Resurrection of the Dead, not, as the Swedenborgians say, immediately to each man after death; but at some future period, general, universal, and together."

There *is*, then, according to this account, at present no Resurrection of the dead, but only *is to be* at some future unknown period; and, accordingly, all that we know of the dead is that they are buried; as to their spirits, they have none properly so called, for they are certainly not human.† Does the writer mean to affirm that this is the doctrine of the Catholic Church, of the Athanasian Creed, or of the Apostles' Creed? If so, will it not furnish at least one reason why Swedenborg "presented himself as the herald of the Lord's second Advent, in a New Dispensation of doctrinal truth, and the proclaimer of a great consequent *change in the state of the world*?"

But the writer proceeds to shew that the alleged Catholic doctrine of a Resurrection of the Body, *i.e.* of the material body at the general Resurrection, is based upon Scripture; and introduces, to confirm his doctrine, four passages of Scripture, all of which, as we proceed to shew, are nothing to the purpose.

* *Ibid.*, p. 256.

† See above, p. 83.

The First passage introduced is, "*We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump,*" etc.

But the Apostle goes on to say, "*Then shall be fulfilled that saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory? O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin,*" etc. Now the general Resurrection is the resurrection both of the just and of the unjust; and can it be said that in the case of the unjust, or of sinners, that in them is fulfilled the saying, *O death, where is thy sting!* when the sting of death, which is sin, still remains in them? Therefore, say Locke and other Commentators, the Apostle was *not* here speaking of any simultaneous or universal resurrection, but only of the resurrection of the just: all that is said with regard to the resurrection of the *body* in their case, being, that a natural or animal body is sown, and a spiritual body is raised. Accordingly, Alford observes on 1 Cor. xv. 37, that "before, the *death* of the seed was insisted on; now, the *non-identity* of the seed with the future plant." Again, on the words, *to every seed his own body*, "Such, then, being the case with all seeds, why should it be thought necessary that the *same body* should rise as was *sown*; or that God cannot give to each a resurrection-body, as in nature?" This is the interpretation given also by Locke, Newton, Watson, Paley, Whately, Burton, etc. And now what becomes of the argument against Swedenborg for asserting simply this—that a natural body is sown and a spiritual body is raised, and that the natural body and the spiritual body are not the same?

The Second passage adduced to prove the Resurrection of the material body is the one from Job, "*Though after my skin worms destroy the body, yet in my flesh*

shall I see God," etc. On this passage Dr. Kitto observes,* "The celebrated passage of Job xix. 25, has, indeed, been strongly insisted upon in proof of the early belief of this doctrine (of the Resurrection of the Body); but the most learned Commentators are agreed, and *scarcely any one at the present day disputes*, that such a view of the text arises either from mistranslation or misapprehension; and that Job means no more than to express a confident conviction, that his then diseased and dreadfully corrupted body should be restored to its former soundness; that he should rise from the depressed state in which he lay, to his former prosperity; and that God would manifestly appear (as was the case), to vindicate his uprightness. That no meaning more recondite is to be found in the text, is agreed by Calvin, Mercier, Grotius, Le Clerc, Patrick, Warburton, Darell, Heath, Kennicott, Doderlein, Dathe, Eichhorn, Jahn, De Wette, and a host of others."

Yet this is a text brought forward to prove the Resurrection of the material body, in opposition to Swedenborg!

The Third passage adduced to prove the Resurrection of the material body, is the following:† "*He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies,*" etc., Rom. viii. 11. "Now what is it," says the Editor, "that is here said to be *quicken*ed, or made alive? Not our souls, for they never die; they are always alive, and will live for ever, and therefore can never be said, as though mortal, to be quickened. What, then, is it that is quickened? Our *bodies.*"

To say nothing of the passages, "*The soul that sinneth it shall die,*" Ezek. xviii. 4; "*You being dead in your*

* *Encyclopædia Biblica*, art. Resurrection.

† Page 258.

sins—hath he quickened,” Col. ii. 13; “*She that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth,”* 1 Tim. v. 6; “*Thou hast a name that thou livest and art dead,”* Rev. iii. 1;—to say nothing of these and other passages, when we are told that it is our *bodies* which are quickened, we ask, *What bodies?* Surely the same bodies which were described only in the verse preceding; “*If Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin*”—not shall die, but is already dead. What, then, is the dead or mortal body to which he is referring? The same of which he had before spoken in Rom. vii. 24, “*O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?*” Surely the Apostle was not here calling upon any one to put an end to the life of his material body? So, again, “*In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh,”* Col. ii. 11. “*The body of the sins of the flesh,”* says Estius, “*is the same with the old man, which he elsewhere calls the body of sin.*”* “*That our old man may be crucified together with him, that the body of sin may be destroyed.*” “*He calls,*” therefore, says Calvin, “*the body of death that mass or congeries of sin out of which the whole man is formed;*” “*the appellation of body is the same with that of the outer man and his members.*” “*Locke well paraphrases it,*” says Bloomfield, “*What shall hinder that my carnal appetites, that so often make me fall into sin, shall not bring death upon me, which is awarded me by the law?*” Calvin, therefore, affirms that this text has *nothing to do with the Last Resurrection*; that the Apostle had been referring to the *body* as signifying only the sensuous and grosser part of our being, called the animal or natural man; “*whence we collect,*” says he, “*that the*

* As in Rom. vi. 6.

Apostle is *not* here speaking of *the last resurrection*, but of the continual operation of the Spirit, by means of which, mortifying by degrees the remains of the flesh, he renews within us the heavenly life." The same is the interpretation of Calmet, who refers the passage to a moral and spiritual resurrection; and in this view of the subject Grotius, Macknight, Musculus, Piscator, Locke, and many others concur. At all events, what can be said of this passage as a reliable proof of the Resurrection of the material Body, when we find the following fact stated in a recent comment,* "The Commentators are not agreed whether the resurrection here treated of is to be understood in its proper sense of a future resurrection to a state of felicity, or of a *moral and spiritual one*, namely, to a life of holiness and piety to be effected by the religion of Christ."

The Fourth passage adduced in support of the Resurrection of the material body is: "*For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal, immortality.*"

In order to shew the application of the passage to this purpose, the Editor observes, "Now what is the incorruptible about us, or mortal? Not our spirits; not our souls; for they are neither the one nor the other; but surely it must be our fleshly or corporeal part."

Surely the terms, *corruptible, incorruptible, mortal*, are not applied exclusively to the material body, any more than *death*. "*I fear lest by any means,*" says the Apostle, "*as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your MINDS should be CORRUPTED from the simplicity that is in Christ,*" 2 Cor. xi. 3. Again, "*Perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds,*" 1 Tim. vi. 5. Again, 2 Tim. iii. 8: "*Men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith.*" "*Original sin,*" says the Ninth Article of the Church of

* Blomfield's *Recensio Synoptica*.

England, "is the fault and *corruption* of the nature of every man;" and accordingly, the Apostle reminds the Ephesians, iv. 22, that they "*put off concerning the former conversation the old man which is CORRUPT according to the deceitful lusts,*" etc., and that they put on the new man. And St. Peter i. 1, 23, speaks of "*being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of INCORRUPTIBLE, by the Word of God which liveth and abideth for ever.*"

It does not, then, necessarily follow, that, because a writer is speaking of *mortality* and *corruption*, or of *immortality* and *incorruptibility*, he is therefore speaking of the material body: he may be speaking of the state of the spirit. Indeed the Apostle Paul sometimes follows out the comparison between the two so closely, that Commentators are not always agreed as to when he is speaking of one or the other. Hence, also, Estius observes on 1 Cor. xv. 50: "Neither shall *corruption*, that is SIN, attain to the state of incorruption, or of a blessed immortality; for that by the term *corruption*, SIN is sometimes signified, the passage in 2 Pet. ii. 19 proves—'*While they promised them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption.*'"—The Apostle therefore, as he is speaking only of the resurrection of the just, is not saying that the material body shall no longer be subject to corruptibility in the grave; he is speaking of *corruptible* and *incorruptible* in a higher sense, as indicating respectively states of the carnal and spiritual mind; for "*to be carnally minded is death, to be spiritually minded is life and peace.*" Thus the spiritual bodies which the just shall have, shall be the abode of eternal life; and "this is life eternal, to know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent." Accordingly, as there is a natural body, so there is a spiritual body, and there is, moreover, a resurrection of the body; yet not of

the material but of the spiritual body. At their departure from the material body, both the good and the evil shall enter into the World of Spirits, each with spiritual bodies, and each one animated by that kind of life which he had lived in this world.

We have now examined all the passages from the Bible which the Editor has adduced in support of the Resurrection of the same material body which is laid in the grave; and we find that it is not only "Swedenborgians," but a considerable class of reputedly the best Commentators (many of them of his own Church), who deny their applicability to such a purpose. As to there being as yet no Resurrection or *anastasis* of the Dead, even Hammond observes on Matt. xxii. 22: "The only matter of difficulty now remaining, is, whether the *anastasis* of which the Sadducees ask, and the *anastasis* of the dead which Christ undertakes to demonstrate, v. 31, doth not peculiarly signify *the resurrection of the body* (*i.e.*, the material body). To which I answer positively, that *it doth not*; but denotes *another life* besides this and after this, a continuing or being kept alive by God after departure out of this life."

There has been, therefore, there is now, and there will continue to be, a Resurrection of the Dead, without waiting till the Day of Judgment for the Resurrection of the Body. According to Swedenborg, that resurrection is of a spiritual body distinct and separate from the material body; a material body being required for a material world, and a spiritual body for a spiritual world; and that spiritual body is in a form endowed with senses much more exquisite than those which had been exercised in this present state of existence. One would have thought that such an announcement would have been regarded as consolatory, and be welcomed with joy; but, no! the living, if not the dead, find

some Creed in their way.—“In the Apostles’ Creed,” says Bishop Newton,* “the expression is the *resurrection of the body*; in the Nicene or Constantinopolitan Creed it is the *resurrection of the dead*, which is more Scriptural. The *resurrection of the body* was not inserted into the Apostles’ Creed till some years after the composition of the Nicene Creed. In the Creed of Aquileia and some others it is still worse, *resurrection of the flesh*, which is directly contrary to the authority, and even the express words of the Apostle, ‘Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God.’ It is earnestly to be wished that all Creeds were framed, as much as may be convenient, in the words or at least perfectly agreeable to the sense of Scripture.”—Such is the remark of a Prelate of the Church of England.

The Editor having stated what he maintains to be the Catholic doctrine concerning the Resurrection of the same material body, and supported it by the passages in Scripture we have been considering, proceeds to observe:† “Such is a brief summary of the doctrine of the Church, and of Holy Scripture interpreted by the Church, on the Resurrection of the Flesh. And what is it that the Swedenborgians oppose to it? On what grounds do they attempt, on the mere authority of individual judgment, to set at naught that which is very manifestly the Catholic doctrine? First, they say *it is impossible*; and they look for this impossibility in the natural difficulties which surround the question.”

Rather, first they say it is *unscriptural*, as a reference to the quotation will shew, and then they proceed to the impossibility arising from the natural difficulties which surround the question. There are, says the Editor, chemical

* *Dissertation*, 58.

† Page 259.

changes daily taking place in the human body, while the identity of the body is perfectly preserved, and therefore, he remarks:* “The daily analytical chemistry of the world within our personal knowledge ought surely to lead us, by analogy, to the acceptance of similar things, however apparently wonderful, provided they be taught us of God. And just upon this very ground it is, I mean the chemistry of Nature, that St. Paul argues on this subject with the Sadducee of old, ‘*But some man will say how are the dead raised up, and with what body do they come?*’”

On this subject one of the most eminent chemists of recent times, Sir Humphrey Davy,† is decidedly against the Editor’s opinion, both as to the meaning of Scripture and the chemistry of nature ; for when it was objected by a friend, that Revelation gave no authority to the ideas propounded concerning the spiritual nature of the sentient principle, and that the Christian immortality is founded upon the *resurrection of the body*, the reply is—“This I will not allow ;” and the reason for not allowing it, is, that the doctrine of the resurrection of the body is unscriptural and unphilosophical. The same objection is urged by another eminent chemist,‡ who treats the doctrine as unscriptural, “crude, untrue to nature, and irrational.” “The words of the passage, ‘It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body,’ and of this one, ‘The dead shall be raised incorruptible ;’ these alone,” says he, “should be sufficient to deter the theological expositor from propounding ideas so gross in regard to the changes we are to undergo at that mysterious time. That which is formed of matter, such as circulates in living beings now, can neither be a *spiritual body*, nor free from

* Page 261. † *Consolations in Travel*, p. 202 ; Philalethes, 205.

‡ Professor Johnson’s *Chemistry of Common Life*, vol. ii., p. 442.

the changes which are commonly implied by the word *corruption*."

There is, then, according to these chemists, as little foundation for the resurrection of the same material body, in the chemistry of nature, as in the language of Scripture. But the Editor appeals to the raising of the daughter of Jairus, and, again, to the raising of Lazarus—as if these or similar instances had anything to do with the subject; for the question is not concerning the return of the material and natural into the material and natural, but the transition of both out of these into the spiritual; not whether the material body can come back again into the material world, but whether it can be made to go on into the spiritual world. As to the body of Christ, it was begotten immediately from Jehovah; as such it could not see corruption, but had within it an incorruptible principle, as being the body of God, or that body in which "dwells all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." In that body Christ is the first fruits of them that slept; for "*as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive*," a passage which has no reference to a resurrection of our material body.

If, then, the Editor declares the doctrine of "the same material body"—"the resurrection of the flesh"—"a material resurrection of the bodies of men," ever to have been held as "the bulwark of the Christian faith," and "as very manifestly the Catholic faith," we can only say, in conclusion of this part of the subject, that if "Swedenborgians" could regard it, with the Editor, as "the bulwark of the Christian faith" as well as a Catholic doctrine, they might well be alarmed at seeing, not "Swedenborgians" but Catholics themselves employed in utterly demolishing it; and, therefore, it is a consolation to them to believe that it is no part of the Christian

faith, however it may have been of Catholic doctrine. "The Gnostic," says a late Regius Professor of Divinity, at Oxford,* "believed the soul to enter upon its purified and celestial existence immediately after death, without being exposed to any final judgment or any further change. The Fathers very justly exposed the error of this notion; but I cannot help thinking that their desire to establish the Resurrection led them to hold a language, and to inculcate a doctrine which is nowhere expressly revealed in Scripture. It is nowhere asserted in the New Testament that we shall 'rise again with our bodies.'"

Having disposed, then, of the subject of this earthly body, the next question which suggests itself is—"Whither has the spirit fled," on its release from this body? and, says the Editor, "in this point also, as well as in the doctrine of the Resurrection, the 'Swedenborgians' have set forth most wild and romantic doctrines."

Let us see what they are. The consideration of this subject leads to that of—

THE INTERMEDIATE STATE.

"Their† doctrine is," says the Editor, "that the soul or spirit of man does not, immediately upon its separation from the body, enter into heaven or into hell, but into an intermediate region between the two which they call the *World of Spirits*." The Editor is willing to admit that in this respect "their doctrine is correct;" nay, further, is willing to admit with Swedenborg, that this Intermediate State is one of cleansing, and, in general, of preparation

* Dr. Burton, *Bampton Lectures*, A.D. 1829, p. 429.

† *Swedenborgians*, p. 266.

for heaven or hell. "There* is," says the Editor, "nothing objectionable in the statement of this doctrine, neither is it opposed to the general teaching of the Church. Persons in these latter days have generally confounded the unauthorized additions of Purgatory with the ancient truths of the Intermediate State, and so have rejected both equally: whereas the one is totally distinct from the other."

Thus far, then, Swedenborg and the Catholic Church are agreed; but now comes the alleged divergence, first of all in reference to—

THE JUDGMENT DAY.

"It is wonderful,"† says the Editor, "how Swedenborg and his followers can adopt this doctrine (of the Intermediate State), because they imagine that the Day of Judgment is already past, whereas the Church teaches the doctrine on the express ground that it is to come."

Now the Catholic doctrine is this—that there are two Judgments, the one particular, the other general. The particular Judgment begins at the death of each individual when he enters into the Intermediate State; the general Judgment takes place when the Intermediate State terminates. It is admitted by Catholics, that the final doom of the individual is determined by the particular Judgment, and the doctrine taught by Swedenborg is thus far the same with that of the Catholic Church; so that in this respect, the Day of Judgment, to those who are now living or are yet to be born, is *not already past*, but is yet to come; a day in which every individual shall be judged according to that which he hath done in the body, whether

* *Swedenborgians*, p. 269.

† *Ibid.*, p. 269.

it be good or whether it be evil. This Judgment, which is yet to come, is no other than the final ordeal which the person undergoes in the Intermediate State, preparatory to his entrance into Heaven or Hell.

But in addition to this Judgment the Catholic Church teaches a second or a general Judgment; and this second Judgment has been, to Catholics themselves, the source of all manner of embarrassment and perplexity, from which "Swedenborgians" are free. The Editor admits, that, to the impenitent, the Intermediate State is "but little otherwise than hell itself," while to the righteous it is a state of "repose and peace." Here, then, is a case in which the destinies of the wicked and the righteous are virtually settled before the Day of general Judgment arrives; the Judgment of the Last Day is in fact forestalled, and the dilemma is thus described by a distinguished prelate:* "It seems strange that a man should first undergo his sentence, and afterwards be brought to trial; should first enter upon his reward or punishment, and then, perhaps, many centuries after, be tried, and then judged and acquitted, or condemned." Indeed, had the "Swedenborgians" taught anything half as perplexing, the Editor might justly have been eloquent upon the subject of their wild and romantic doctrine; but as the dilemma happens to be that of the Catholic Church, *The Old Church Porch* is naturally silent upon the subject; while the only way in which others attempt to escape from the embarrassment is, either by arguing for the necessity of an intermediate state of unconsciousness, or by denying the particular Judgment altogether.

According to Swedenborg the general Judgment takes

* *Scriptural Revelations of a Future State*, by Dr. Whately, Archbishop of Dublin; p. 83.

place not in the natural but in the spiritual world ; and is no other than a vast number of simultaneous particular judgments which had been deferred for Providential purposes till that period, which, on earth, is called *the consummation of the age*, but which is erroneously translated *the end of the world*. This is the general Judgment referred to in Rev. vi. 10, "*How long, O Lord, Holy and True, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell upon the earth? And it was said unto them that they should rest yet for a little season, until the times of their fellow-servants and brethren should be fulfilled.*"

—Now the spiritual world, according to Swedenborg, is to the natural world as the soul to the body ; the spiritual world is the world of causes, the natural world the world of effects ; a change in the spiritual world must lead to a change in the natural ; a consummation in the spiritual world to a consummation in the natural ; a fulfilment of states in the one to a fulfilment of times in the other. That in the natural world a consummation of some kind has actually taken place, and that there are visible signs of the dawn of a New Era, has become almost a trite observation. But the world in general is at a loss to account for the cause : that cause must be sought in the world of causes, and is no other than the Judgment spoken of in the Apocalypse, which has already been effected in the spiritual world, in virtue of which the former heavens and earth have passed away, the heavens and earth of a New Dispensation have commenced, and thus a New Era of the Church in the natural world.

With these remarks we proceed to the question concerning—

THE NATURE AND EMPLOYMENTS OF
ANGELS.

Swedenborg teaches, as he is justly represented, that when a man dies he ultimately becomes an angel or devil, according to the life which he had led in this world; and that there are no angels or devils other than those who were once men. This statement the Editor arraigns in the following manner :* “ We have been already told, that as far as the material body of the man is concerned, *that* perishes and is annihilated, and is never more restored. And now we are told that as to his spiritual part, his soul, that also disappears; for it migrates into another order of beings, and becomes either an angel or a devil. What is there left then of the man? Where is that being who, created out of the dust in the image of God, was made *man*? It was a fiction and a falsehood altogether, for he was not a man at all, but an embryo angel.”

The Editor tells us that, according to the Catholic doctrine, Angels are another order of beings quite different from that of men. Now, if the angels are of a different order from that of men, so different that a man cannot be an angel nor an angel a man, then, if a man should become an angel we may well ask, “ What is there left, then, of the man ?” etc., etc. But who says that the Angels are of an order thus different from men? Not Swedenborg, but, according to the Editor, the Catholic Church. The Editor has plainly confounded the two sides of the question; for the absurdity results from the Catholic doctrine, not from that of Swedenborg. Surely if, as Swedenborg teaches, angels are men, there is no disappearance of humanity in becoming an Angel; nor any migration into a

* *Swedenborgians*, p. 273.

different order of beings; nor anything “perplexing in being told in one place, that man after death is still a man, and in another, that when man has passed from the natural into the spiritual sphere he is an angel.” An utter inconsistency on the alleged Catholic principle; but on that of Swedenborg a perfectly consistent and simple truth.

It, on the ground of the different natures of Angels and men, it be denied that a *man* can be an *Angel*, or an *Angel* a *man*; and if, as the Editor tells us, the Catholic doctrine does really deny it; yet we apprehend that it is not to be found in Athanasius' definition of an Angel, *Animal rationale expers materiæ*, unless we believe with the Editor, that a material body is essential to a living rational being. Swedenborg's account of the matter is, that *man* is the name of the image and likeness of God; and therefore that the Angels, being more especially in that image and likeness, are on that account more especially *men*—of transcendent beauty and splendour; and if they have actually been seen as men, where is the absurdity in regarding them as men? We speak of God-man and Man-God; why may we not speak of an Angelic Man, or a Human Angel, especially when St. John says of the wall of the New Jerusalem, that it was “according to the measure of a MAN, that is, of an ANGEL?” Does the Editor imagine that when Christians are in heaven, in a glorified human body, enjoying the beatific vision of the Divine *Humanity*, the Angels are to be seen in a separate society, in forms that are not human? How can even Angels enjoy the felicity of being with Christ, if they are not to be like Him, or if, in order to be like Him, they must cease to be angels? *Angel* is the name of an *office*; *Man* is the name of a *nature*; and it is not usual for the nature of a man to be annihilated by being promoted to a higher office. The nature of a man being made manifest by the process of

Judgment, if the functions of that nature are those of doing the will of God, the man is consequently called to the office of being a *messenger* of God ; and therefore it is, that Prophets, Apostles, and even Bishops of the Church, have, in this capacity, all been called *Angels*.

But, according to Swedenborg, men and women in this world will be men and women in the next ; and there will be spiritual unions in heaven corresponding to the marriage union upon earth.

In opposing this doctrine, the Editor first of all charges Swedenborg with “utter contradictions and inconsistencies ;” and asks,* “Is it not better to cast ourselves in repose upon the Catholic Faith, and the Church’s interpretation of God’s Word, than thus to flounder about in wild speculations and dreamy visions which melt into air when you attempt to bring any meaning out of them ?”

To this we reply, what if the inconsistencies and contradictions are simply those of the Editor himself ? What if the Catholic Faith and the Church’s interpretation of the Word of God really discountenance the teaching of the Editor, and countenance the teaching of Swedenborg ? We have had some specimens of this already : we proceed to offer in the sequel a few more : and first of all as to Swedenborg’s “utter inconsistencies and contradictions,” which are set out in array before the reader in the following manner :—

“When† upon the broad basis laid down in regard to the resurrection of the body, it was over and over again denied that men could have bodies in the next world, but that they were of necessity only spirits ; and when now again it is laid down as a distinct dogma that the holy Angels are, as spiritual beings, merely the transformation of

* *Swedenborgians*, p. 279.

† *Ibid.*, p. 278.

the *souls* out of the pre-existing bodies of men, which bodies perish, it is wonderful that we are now to be told, after all, that '*they who have been men and women in this world shall still be respectively men and women in the next, and consequently that there must exist pure marriage unions in heaven,*' and *connections of an opposite nature in hell.*'

Now Swedenborg had all along been teaching that man, after death, is still a man in a substantial yet spiritual body: the Editor as strenuously affirmed that men could *not* have any bodies in the Intermediate State; that as such they must wait for them till the general Resurrection, which has not yet taken place; and further, that the material body is essential to man as man. The Editor has here confounded, a second time, the two distinct sides of the question: it was not Swedenborg who denied the resurrection of bodies immediately after death, but the Editor. The truth is, the Editor is so prepossessed with the popular theological fallacy that *body* is opposed to *spirit* and *spirit* to *body*, that what is *spirit* cannot be *body* and what is *body* cannot be *spirit*, that it may be well to remind him of the remarks of a late Regius Professor of Divinity at Oxford upon this subject.*

"In common language the terms *body* and *spirit* are accustomed to be opposed, and are used to represent two things which are totally distinct. But St. Paul here brings the two expressions together, and speaks of a *spiritual body*. St. Paul therefore did not oppose *body* to *spirit*, and though the looseness of modern language may allow us to do so, and yet to be correct in our ideas, it may save some confusion if we consider *spirit* as opposed to *matter*, and if we take *body* to be a generic term which comprises both. A *body*, therefore, in the language of St. Paul, is something

* Dr. Burton, *Bampton Lectures*, p. 429.

which has distinct individual existence. If we were to call it a *substance* the expression might again be liable to indistinctness; because *substance*, in modern language, conveys the idea of materiality, or at least, tangibility. But the language of metaphysics might allow us to call spirit a *substance*. St. Paul, as we have seen, would have called it a *body*; and Tertullian, in the same manner, says that the soul may be called a *body*, though he adds, that it is a body *proprie qualitatis et sui generis.*"

These remarks are in perfect conformity with the doctrine of Swedenborg: and, according to them, Swedenborg is only maintaining the Apostolic doctrine when he says that *spirit is substance, or body*, and that a spirit is a *spiritual body*; which *body*, as Swedenborg affirms, is in the human form.

But now comes the application of the argument to the nature of Angels; and as, on this subject, the Editor has said that it is better to cast ourselves in repose upon the Catholic Faith and the Church's interpretation of the Word of God, it may be well to enquire what these are in reference to the questions, Whether angels have bodies? Whether those bodies are distinguished by sexes? and, Whether there be spiritual unions in heaven corresponding to the marriage union upon earth? We shall, therefore, set forth the Catholic teaching upon these subjects, and compare it with that of Swedenborg.

First, as to the *bodies* of the Angels—a subject which it might be thought is purely speculative; but which, as we shall see in the sequel, has an important practical relation to the present state of theology. We confess, however, to feeling somewhat humiliated in being obliged to prove, in this the nineteenth century of the Christian Church, that Angels have bodies. But let this pass.



Origen held that Angels possess bodies ; and so also, according to Suarez,* did Justin, Clemens of Alexandria, Athenagoras, Methodius, Eusebius, Lactantius, and Cyprian. Augustine expressly says in Psalm lxxxv., and indeed frequently repeats throughout his works, that Angels have bodies. St. Bernard says, that the Fathers differed from each other in their sentiments upon this subject ; that as for himself he knew not which way to decide, but that if any one thought that Angels possess bodies it was an opinion he might fairly entertain. Rupertus expressly defends the opinion, and so do other ancient writers ; indeed, a learned commentator upon Origen goes so far as to say that it was the opinion of nearly all antiquity.

According to this account, the Angels are not so far a different order from men as to be without bodies. Hence in the *Biblical Cyclopædia*† we read, “In the Scriptures angels appear with *bodies*, and in the *human form*, and no intimation is anywhere given that these bodies are not real, or that they were only assumed for the time and then laid aside. . . . The modern idea of *spirit* was unknown to the ancients, they believed it to be immaterial, but not incorporeal ; and we may with sufficient safety assume that angels are *spiritual bodies*, rather than *pure spirits*, in the modern acceptance of the word.”

We thus see, then, that Angels have bodies, and are themselves *spiritual bodies*, rather than pure spirits, in the modern acceptance of the word ; we have, likewise, seen the same to be affirmed of the spirits of men immediately after death. The next question is, whether, after leaving the material body, the spiritual body preserves the *distinction of sex* ; and, lastly, whether there are *marriages in*

* *De Angelis*, lib. i., cap. 6.

† By Dr. Kitto.

heaven. These, again, are no merely speculative subjects; but, as we shall see in the sequel, are of the utmost practical significance.

We proceed to consider them both together, under the article of—

MARRIAGES IN HEAVEN.

On this subject the Editor thus expresses himself:—

“Further* on, in the same book, we have a wonderful announcement, *in contradiction to all Catholic teaching*, to the effect that a great part of the delights and pleasures of heaven consist in the conjugal relationship of the angels abiding there; and that since they are *of different sexes*, the same idea of marriage is retained as existed before upon earth. . . . As to *marriage unions* existing in heaven, or any other sort of union in hell, and the angels or devils being of *two sexes* as here on earth, it might have been thought that any one reading our Lord’s description on this point, would have been satisfied as to the absurdity, if not more, of the Swedenborgian doctrine. For when the Sadducees, disputing about the resurrection, put this difficulty about carrying on the marriage-union into the next world, stating that seven brethren had *one wife* on earth, and then asked, ‘Whose wife shall she be of the seven in the resurrection?’ our Lord at once solved the difficulty by saying that they erred, not knowing the Scriptures nor the power of God; for ‘*in Heaven they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels.*’ How as the angels? By not having carnal or fleshly bodies. By not having carnal or fleshly relationship, as men and women on earth. Men in heaven are to be of an entirely different society and intercourse, as opposed to

* *Swedenborgians*, pp. 277, 279.

that of men on earth, namely, that of angels ; not that they should pass into angels, but have that peculiarity of angels which did not admit of the continuance of such earthly relationship as marriage. Men were not to sensualize heaven by carnal imaginations.”

From these remarks we perceive, that the Editor has just as much objection to the doctrine of the continuance of *sex* after death, as to that of the existence of marriage ; nay, he asserts that this is one of the things which is “*in contradiction to all Catholic teaching ;*” the very opposite of which we shall see to be the case, and that Catholic teaching has, to a very great extent, sanctioned the doctrine. Indeed, one reason of this has been, that it was perceived and admitted that, without the distinction of sex, the identity of the body could not be preserved ; and if, as some of the best physiologists have argued, sex is primarily of the mind and derivatively of the body, the loss of sex would destroy the personal identity of the individual both as to soul and body ; nay, further, would imperil the whole doctrine of a future state ; for, in this case, the argument applies as much to the identity of a man’s spirit as to the identity of his body. And will the Editor deny that there is such a thing as a manly spirit, a masculine mind, and masculine thoughts ; or, a feminine spirit, a feminine mind, and feminine affections ? Let him succeed, if he can, in taking away the distinctive character of sex from either, and then he will succeed in abolishing both. Is it, however, true that the doctrine of the continuance of sex is contrary to all Catholic teaching ?

Cornelius a Lapide, in treating of this subject in his commentary on St. Matthew xxii. and Ephesians iv., maintains that at the Resurrection the distinction of sex will be preserved ; and, referring to some fathers who

might be thought to teach the contrary, he observes that they are not to be understood as denying the difference of sexes in heaven "*quoad substantiam sed quoad usum*:" and he further remarks,—“ You will reply that Christ asserts, that ‘ *in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven.*’ I rejoin, that Christ is here only denying that in heaven there will be marriage and the use of marriage, but not that there will be no females ; nay, rather, he strongly insinuates that in heaven there will be females, when he says, ‘ *they neither marry,*’ that is to say, the men ; ‘ *nor are given in marriage,*’ that is to say, the women.”

Accordingly, Augustine also observes, “ To me they seem to think most justly who doubt not that the sexes shall rise again ;” so likewise Calmet. What, then, becomes of the Editor’s assertion, that at the Resurrection the preservation of the distinction of sex is contradictory to all Catholic teaching ?

It is in vain to take refuge in the notion, “ *quoad substantiam sed non quoad usum* ;” for if sex be of the mind, the adoption of the foregoing notion would only amount *quoad substantiam* to a privation of *being* ; *quoad usum* to a privation of conscious *life* ; in which supposed heavenly state men and women, instead of enjoying celestial *life*, would only emulate those forms of humanity of which it is written, “ Eyes have they, but they see not ; ears have they, but they hear not ; mouths have they, but they speak not ; feet have they, but they walk not :” all have they “ *quoad substantiam sed non quoad usum.*”

The abolition of sex, however, was necessary to the Editor’s argument : for if to be as the Angels implied the abolition of sex, then if sex be not abolished and yet men and women are as the Angels, of course the question is

easily answered, How as the Angels? or, How as to the Angels?

The distinctions of sex then being preserved, the question arises concerning *marriages in heaven*.

And here we would ask, Does the passage quoted from St. Matthew really mean that in the resurrection there is no marriage in any sense whatever? or, as Origen says, Would not this be to make Scripture contradict itself? For at the beginning of the very chapter in which this passage occurs we find these words, "*The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king which made a MARRIAGE for his son;*" and again, at the second Advent, "*When they went to buy, the bridegroom came, and they that were ready went in with him to the MARRIAGE, and the door was shut;* and again, "*Blessed are they which are called to the MARRIAGE supper of the Lamb;*" on which passage Maldonatus observes (Matt. xxiv.), "John is here treating, not of marriages which are to be celebrated upon earth, but of those *marriages which are to be celebrated in heaven* at the time of the Resurrection." There are, then, according to Catholic teaching, marriages of some kind or other to be celebrated in heaven.

The next question is, What is the nature of these marriages?

On this subject Origen observes, that, whereas, it is said of marriages on earth, "*They twain shall be one flesh,*" so of marriages in heaven we may say, "*They twain shall be one spirit,*" and that in this consists the difference between the two. "Therefore," says he, "in the resurrection of the dead, the Son of the King" (Matt. xxii. 2)—that is, the Christian man as a son of God—"contracts a marriage which is above every marriage which the eye hath seen, the ear hath heard, or it hath

entered into the heart of man to conceive : it is a venerable, divine, and spiritual marriage, which is one of those arcana which it is not lawful for man to utter.”—A venerable, divine, and spiritual marriage, consisting in this, “*They twain shall be one spirit.*”

What, now, becomes of the Editor’s assertion, that the doctrine of the distinction of sexes and of marriages in heaven is contrary to *all* Catholic teaching? Contrary to *some* he might have said, and even to *much*; if, however, he appeals to Catholic teaching on his side of the question, he must allow us the liberty of appealing to Catholic teaching on the other.

“*I have many things to say unto you,*” said our Saviour, “*but ye cannot bear them now;*” and in the case of St. Paul, if heavenly marriages were indeed one of those subjects on which it was not then lawful for him to speak; still it does not follow that it was always to remain a mystery, for truths which might not be revealed under one Dispensation, might under another.

The doctrine that there are *no marriages in heaven* is the doctrine of *the dissolution by death of marriage upon earth*. In this respect, although the modern Catholic Church professes to teach the indissolubility of marriage, yet, in point of fact, it teaches the contrary; for however Christianized the relationship between husband and wife upon earth, it ceases at death, and no such relationship, nor any corresponding to it, is said to exist in heaven: married partners are there to know each other as such no longer: instead of their being made more truly one in Christ, the union which had already existed between them is to be dissolved, for “in heaven they neither marry nor are given in marriage;” and there is no definite conceivable relationship to take its place. What a dreary con-

solation! what a dismal blessing to the husband and wife who have truly loved each other! Yet this, we are told, is Catholic teaching! Compare it, now, with that of Swedenborg.

“They who, in a married state, during the life of the body, have enjoyed the happiness resulting from genuine conjugal love, enjoy the same happiness also in another life; so that the happiness of one life is continued to them in that of another, and in the other life there is effected a *union of minds*, in which is heaven. I have been told that the kinds of celestial and spiritual happiness thence derived, according to the most general view only, are indefinite in number.”*

The reason of this is founded upon the essential nature of marriage. For the mind consists of two parts, the one called the understanding, the other the will: in heaven the husband acts as that part of the individual mind which is called the understanding, and the wife as that which is called the will. The understanding is formed by truths out of the holy Word; the will by the affections which love them. Thus the marriage union of two minds is the marriage union of heavenly truth and good from out of the Word of God. What can the Editor mean by calling such a marriage sensual? Surely he does not mean to be profane. No! rather we prefer to believe that he was simply ignorant of a profound and sacred subject.

“Genuine conjugal love,” says Swedenborg,† “is an image of heaven; and when it is represented in another life, it is by the most beautiful objects that the eye can see or the mind conceive. It is represented by a virgin of inexpressible beauty encompassed with a bright cloud,

* *Arcana Cœlestia*, art. 2734.

† *Ibid.*, art. 2735.

so that she may be said to be beauty itself in essence and form. All beauty in another life is said to proceed from conjugal love; the affections and thoughts of that love are represented by adamantine atmospheres, sparkling as it were with rubies and carbuncles, and this with delights which affect the inmost principles of the mind. As soon as anything of lasciviousness intervenes, they disappear.”

“Marriages* in heaven are spiritual, and should not be called nuptials, but *conjunctions of minds* originating in the *marriage of good and truth*; but on earth they are nuptials because they are not only of the *spirit*, but also of the *flesh*; and since there are no nuptials in heaven, two married partners there are not called husband and wife, but each is called—from the angelic idea of the conjunction of two minds into one—by a term which signifies that which belongs to both mutually and reciprocally. From these observations it may be known how the Lord’s words in Luke xx. 35, 36, concerning nuptials, are to be understood.”

We now proceed to ask, How it is that the words addressed to the *Sadducees* are so often quoted against marriages in heaven, and yet the words addressed to the *Church* are not quoted in their favour? Simply because upon this subject the modern Catholic Church has passed into the Sadducean state, and understands the whole subject after a Sadducean manner; it must naturally, therefore, accept our Lord’s answer to the Sadducees, and, like the Sadducees, be satisfied with it in the only sense in which Sadducees can understand it. For, as the Editor says—“How as the angels? By not having carnal or fleshly bodies. By not having carnal or fleshly relation-

* *Heaven and Hell*, art. 382. See also *Conjugal Love*, art. 41.

ship as men and women on earth.”* “Men are not to sensualize heaven by carnal imaginations,” as if this, as the Sadducees thought, was the only way in which marriage could be contemplated; for what can mere Sadducees know of the mystery of the union between Christ and His Church? What Sadducee could ever have thought, ever have said with Jeremy Taylor†—“Marriage is divine in its institution, sacred in its union, holy in the mystery, sacramental in its signification, honourable in its appellative, religious in its employments: it is advantage to the societies of men: and it is holiness to the Lord: but this I say, it must be in Christ and the Church.” We ask if this Anti-Sadducean view of the subject would have suited the Editor’s argument? Certainly there are no such marriages in heaven as the Sadducees thought, which, in fact, were *no marriages at all*; but if it were true, as they thought, that it was the only kind of marriage which could be called marriage, then they have their answer. It is literally true, as our Lord said, that in the resurrection “*they neither marry nor are given in marriage*,” for unquestionably the relation between husband and wife, such as exists between Christ and the Church, the Sadducees would not have called marriage; it would have been to them something altogether incomprehensible.

Thus far, then, with respect to *marriages in heaven*: but we now come to consider the alleged Catholic teaching concerning—

THE ORIGIN OF ANGELS,

and compare it with what Swedenborg has said upon this subject. Swedenborg says that there are no Angels which

* Who is it that has been contending *for* the resurrection of the *flesh*? And who is it that has been contending *against* it?

† Sermon on the *Marriage Ring*, vol. 5, p. 255.

have not been men, upon some earth or other in the material universe. To this doctrine the Editor opposes that of the Fathers: "That Angels were," says he, "in some way an original and independent creation, the ancient Church never had a doubt," p. 282.

Well might the Editor say, "in some way;" for some Fathers thought they were created before the heaven and earth mentioned in Genesis; some that they were created at the same time; some that they were created afterwards; some that they were created out of air; some that they were created out of nothing; some that they were created in Paradise; some that they were created out of it,—enough, one would have thought, to convince any reasonable man that they were writing upon a subject which they did not understand. Indeed, a very celebrated writer in the Church of Rome, having determined that the Angels are without bodies, proceeds afterwards gravely to discuss the question, Whether Angels can naturally know supernatural entities quidditatively. "However," says the Editor, "suppose, leaving the Commentaries of the Fathers, we take up our Bibles in our own hands, what shall we infer? In the second chapter of Genesis we read, 'Then *the heavens were finished, and all the host of them.*' What can this expression, '*the host of them,*' mean, except it be the angels; as it is said of the angels in Gen. xxxii. 2, '*This is God's host?*'"

The common marginal references, we suggest, supply the answer to this question; thus, in Deut. iv. 19, we read, "*Lest thou lift up thine eyes unto heaven, and when thou seest the sun, and the moon, and the stars, even all THE HOST OF HEAVEN, shouldest be driven to worship them,*" etc. The worship of *the host of heaven* was an idolatry to which the Jews were prone, by which was signified not

the worship of angels, but the worship of the heavenly bodies, as mentioned by Stephen in Acts vii. 42,—“*Then God turned and gave them up to worship THE HOST OF HEAVEN,*”—that is to say, the sun, moon, and stars, not an order of Angels entirely different from that of men, having a separate and independent creation. If, however, the spiritual or allegorical sense of *the host of heaven* be demanded, we need not have recourse to the signification of a separate order of Angels. We read of Christ holding “*the seven stars in his right hand,*” of the woman “*clothed with the sun and crowned with twelve stars,* of the *day star* arising in the heart, of the *morning star* being given, and so forth; all which, it is agreed by the best commentators in the Catholic Church, signify the various kinds of Divine knowledge; hence, in Wisdom x. 17, it is said, “*Wisdom was unto them for a cover by day, and a light of stars in the night season.*” As to St. Paul’s reference to the Angels as being created by God, “whether they be thrones or dominions, or principalities, or powers,” the Apostle simply says that all these were created by Him; but where is anything said or implied that, therefore, the Angels constitute an independent creation, or are a separate and distinct order from men? The Angels may, indeed, be called “morning stars” from their possession of knowledge, and “sons of God,” from their being led by the Spirit of God; but so, also, may men; for we know that “they who turn many to righteousness shall shine as the *stars in heaven,*” and “as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the *sons of God.*”

If it be said, that Angels were present at the creation of this world, and before the creation of man, we have a right to ask, in the first place, how far the popular notions concerning the creation of this world are true? And if it

be said that Angels were present at the creation of man in this world, surely it by no means follows that, therefore, they had never been *men*.

If the Editor should appeal to the Book of Enoch, as referred to in Peter and Jude, let him do so ; and he will there find such abundance of wild and romantic doctrine as, with all his antipathies, might induce him, perhaps, far to prefer Swedenborg.

The subjects we have been considering have been too often regarded as speculative : we have alluded more than once to their practical importance. But how practical ? If we are destined for heaven, if our affections are to be set on things above and not on things on the earth, it is of the first importance that heavenly things should be set before us in such a manner as to engage our affections ; instead of which, we find them presented in a way in which all the affections we now entertain are disappointed, chilled, repulsed, and revolted. The dead are not yet raised, they are all bodiless beings, all shrouded somewhere in mist and mystery, whether human or not is a matter of doubt ; husbands are not to meet again their wives as wives, nor wives their husbands :* “ men in heaven are to be of an *entirely different* society and intercourse, as *opposed* to that of men on earth, viz., that of Angels ; not that they should pass into Angels, but have that peculiarity of Angels which did not permit of such earthly relationship as marriage ;” in plain words, they are to be like beings without sexes, with all their former sympathies dissolved, their very identity being questionable : and this is the state for which they are to pray in these words, *Thy*

* Accordingly the custom of making funerals as gloomy as possible is quite consistent. They cannot be too gloomy ! They are appropriately symbolical only of the night side of Nature.

kingdom come. Will they do so? Will they not be utterly careless, indifferent, reckless upon the subject? or rather, would they not pray *against* such a kingdom, and cordially say, Deliver me from such a hereafter, and from such a heaven? It is no Gospel to me that my departed wife and children are without bodies! no Gospel to me that they are not yet raised from the dead! Call you these good tidings? No! such a religion can never gain my affections, even though enforced by centuries of Catholic teaching. What is the consequence? Thoughtful people prefer the teaching of Swedenborg.

We have seen that Angels, whether good or evil, have bodies; that spirits in the Intermediate State have also bodies, yet not material but spiritual bodies; and, further, that there is to be no resurrection of the material body.* These circumstances must effect a very considerable change in the popular notions respecting the nature and manner of the Second Advent.

For as material bodies are for the material world, so spiritual bodies are for the spiritual world, and therefore it is that it is the spiritual world which is the scene of the Second Advent. If, however, this be the case, what is the nature of the Second Advent? Is it a Personal coming, or is it not? Swedenborg tells us that this Second Coming is a *Personal* coming, yet not in the

* The Editor says, in p. 283, that when the spirit has left the body and passes into Hades, "there it abides; but it does not change its essence as a *human being*." This is the very doctrine of Swedenborg, which the Editor had previously been labouring to oppose; the material body being considered by him to be *essential* to man as man: we, therefore, presume it is a *lapsus calami*. When it is further said that man, if he became an Angel, would migrate into a different order of beings, we reply, This is rather what he does, according to the Editor's first argument, when passing into Hades.

material but in the spiritual world. Accordingly the author of the *Appeal*, to which the Editor refers, observes,* that “the coming of the Lord in the *elementary clouds* is a thing impossible;” that the symbolical language of Scripture is intended to announce, not His coming *into this world* in Person, but “His presence in His Word of Divine Truth, imparting to the intellectual faculties of man the power of rightly understanding it, opening the clouds of the letter, and revealing the glories of its spiritual signification.” A similar interpretation of *coming in clouds* has been received throughout all ages of the Catholic Church. Thus Origen: “He comes every day with great power to the mind of the believer, in *the clouds of prophecy, i.e., in the Scriptures* of the prophets and apostles, who utter the Word of God with a meaning above human nature. Also, we say, that, *to those who understand*, He comes with great glory, and that this is the more seen in the *Second Coming* of the Word, which is to the perfect?”†

While, however, there is no personal coming in the material world, the author of the *Appeal* expressly says there is a personal coming in the spiritual: for instance, “That,” says he, “which is manifested is in both worlds the Divine Truth, but *in the spiritual world the Divine Truth appears in PERSON for the performance of the judgment*, and in the natural world the Divine Truth is revealed in the Word for the restoration of the Church.”

. . . “According to this view it will be seen that although our doctrines deny the possibility of the Lord’s visible appearance in His glorified Person *to men on earth*, they by no means deny that His *visible appearance* would

* Noble’s *Appeal*, section Last Judgment, page 125.

† Aquinas, *Catena Aurea*, Matt. xxiv.

attend the performance of the Last Judgment.”—From these plain declarations of the Personal appearance of our Lord at the Last Judgment, the Editor extracts the following meaning: the “Swedenborgians” say,* “that the description given by the Evangelists and Apostles concerning the Second Advent and our Lord’s coming in *Person* is a *figure*, merely meaning a spiritual enlightenment of the world.”

All comment upon such perverted statements is unnecessary. But this brings us more particularly to consider the Catholic doctrine of our Lord’s Personal Coming or Second Advent, of which a modern interpreter has affirmed that “a more momentous subject does not exist in the whole range of theology.”

SECOND ADVENT.

I.

The Editor thus states his own doctrine of the Personal Coming:—

“It† is said by the Church, interpreting God’s Word from the beginning, that our Lord is to come *in Person* to judge the earth. It is said by Swedenborg, that this merely means the additional light and knowledge of the Gospel dispensation, and that He neither has, nor will, come *in person* at all. Which are we to believe?”

With all deference we answer, Certainly not the Editor. Swedenborg’s statement is, that our Lord comes in Person at the Last Judgment, not into the material world, but into the spiritual world, as is evident from his whole work upon the Apocalypse. The Editor is perpetually confounding this distinction, and, in consequence,

* *Swedenborgians*, p. 287.

† *Ibid.*, p. 290.

charges Swedenborg with denying that our Lord will come in Person at all.

As to the Second Personal Coming of our Lord *into the material world*, the following answer to the question, "Which are we to believe?" is given, not by "Swedenborgians," but by Dr. Lee, a late Regius Professor of Hebrew in the University of Cambridge.

"Wherefore,* if they shall say unto you, Behold, He is in the desert, go not forth; behold He is in the secret chamber, believe it not. For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even to the west, so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be;" that is, *in power*, not *visibly* and *personally*, but as in the clouds of heaven. (Comp. Zech. ix. 14-17 inclusive). To take refuge, therefore, in a strictly *literal* interpretation of this place, and so to extract a *personal* appearance of Christ, is contrary to the manifest intention of Scripture and to every fact of the times, and deserves not a moment's further consideration."

But there is another passage in Scripture to which the Vicar refers, in proof that the Second Coming is a coming into this material world "Personally," and to "judge the earth;"† thus he observes:—

"And how know we this? We know it from the Word of God, interpreted from the very beginning, with an invariable testimony running through all the Churches, speaking without a doubt. 'This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come *in like manner* as ye have seen Him go up into heaven.' And in what manner shall this same Jesus come? Is it to be in some imaginary and visionary form, as pouring forth out of Himself rays of Divine light in the world of

* *An Enquiry into the Nature, Progress, and End of Prophecy*, p. 108.

† *Swedenborgians*, p. 295.

spirits, and not regarding the sublunary world, which is still suffered to go on in its course? By no means. 'He is to come, *in like manner* as ye have seen Him go into heaven.' That manner was *personally* in His glorified flesh."

To this view of the case Dr. Lee replies as follows:—

"*This* same Jesus which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven; that is, in the clouds of heaven, with signs of power, and in great glory; for this is the manner in which He then ascended. Besides, He himself says, evidently for the purpose of doing away every expectation of a personal revelation of Himself (John xiv. 19): Yet a little while, and the world seeth Me no more. But if every eye should sensibly see Him (Rev. i. 7), then the whole world should.*"

So, likewise, affirms another modern interpreter, referring to many of the foregoing passages:—

"Nothing† can be more evident than that our Lord intended, in these passages, to check erroneous impressions respecting a *literal* coming to this earth, and to convey the idea that, although false Christs and false prophets should announce such a coming, as we know from Josephus that they did, yet this, His advent, would be of a totally different kind." "He warned His disciples, that if told of a literal coming upon earth they were not to believe it."

But if there is to be no such literal and Personal coming into the material world, is there no other kind of coming?

It is expressly said that the Coming is to be in *clouds*;

* *An Enquiry into the Nature, Progress, and End of Prophecy*, p. 108. See also p. 128.

† *Apocalypse Fulfilled*. By the Rev. P. S. Desprez. Second Edition, p. 403.

and Origen, as we have seen, referring to the Word of God, speaks of the manifestation of its spiritual sense as a Coming of the Lord in the *clouds of the Word*. Philo* speaks of the *Word of God* as being the *cloud* between the Egyptians and Israelites, being dark to the one and bright to the other, and as “showering down wisdom on the minds which study virtue.”

In a sermon† on the words, “Behold He cometh in *clouds*,” the Bishop of Lincoln thus refers to the Patriarchs, Prophets, and Apostles :—

“Such are the *clouds* on which the Divine Comer, Jesus Christ, came, comes, and will come ; the *clouds* in the heaven of His Church, from which He pours down the spirit of grace and supplications upon His people, and makes them turn their eyes and hearts in penitential love to Him, and by which He sends a gracious rain upon His inheritance and refreshes it when it is weary.

“Even, now, in a certain sense, the text has been fulfilled to you. Christ, who will come hereafter on the *clouds* of heaven with His holy angels, *has* come, and comes daily to you on the *clouds* of Apostles and Prophets.”

But what, we ask, are apostles and prophets apart from the Word of God? If they come in their own name, are we not warned against them? The very source to which they owe their existence as apostles and prophets, is solely and wholly the Word of God.

There is, however, a still further interpretation of the Coming of Christ, namely, one which is immediately connected with the *passing away of the Dispensation*. Thus, Professor Lee observes :—

* *Who is the Heir of Divine Things*, art. 42.

† *Hulsean Lectures*, p. 144, 157.

“Christ’s* coming in power may be considered as equivalent to the declaration, that His kingdom should now be established *de facto*, and, consequently, that the previous temporary Dispensation should have wholly passed away. His coming thus, therefore, was to accomplish all this, and thence to constitute a sign of the *entire end of that moral state of things.*”

This is substantially the same interpretation with that of Swedenborg; and although Dr. Lee applies it to the end of the Jewish Dispensation, the Bishop of Lincoln and others apply the prophecy to the end of the Christian Dispensation, which is just what Swedenborg does. *Power*, says Swedenborg, relates to essential Divine good; *glory*, to essential Divine truth; and this *power* and *glory* of Christ will be manifested in the Word at the *end of the present Dispensation*; when, according to the Bishop of Lincoln, there will be “troubles, alarms, and defections in the Church. The Sun shall be darkened, *i.e.*, the solar light of Christ’s truth shall be dimmed, the lunar orb of the Church shall be obscured by heresy and unbelief, and some, who once shone brightly as stars in the firmament of the Church, shall fall from their place. (Matt. xxiv. 29).

Swedenborg’s interpretation of this Coming in *clouds*, in *power*, and in great *glory*, is as follows:—

“He† who is acquainted with the spiritual things, to which the natural expressions of the Word correspond, has the power of knowing that by the Lord’s advent in the *clouds* of heaven, is not to be understood that He will thus appear (in the literal sense), but that He will appear in the Word; for the Lord is the Word, because He is the Divine Truth. The *clouds* of heaven in which He is to come, are

* *An Enquiry into the Nature, Progress, and End of Prophecy*, p. 123.

† *The Last Judgment*, art. 28.

the sense of the letter of the Word, and the *glory* is its spiritual sense. The angels are the heaven from which He will appear, and, moreover, they are the Lord as to Divine Truths. Hence the meaning of these words is now evident, namely, that when the *end of the Church* is, the Lord will reveal the spiritual sense of the Word, and thus the Divine Truth, such as it is in itself, therefore, that this is the sign that the Last Judgment is at hand."

And now what has the Editor to say to this view of the subject? He charges the Swedenborgians with here perverting the Scripture by assigning an internal sense to its expressions, which he, on the contrary, maintains to be only figures of speech; and, hence, he calls them "figurative accessories," "figurative descriptions," "figurative allusions," "figurative or poetical colouring," in contrast with "matter of fact;" so that the *power* and *great glory* of the Word, as explained by Swedenborg, are mere empty expressions, which have in themselves nothing of truth, and it is the office of the Church to shew this is to be the case "for the edification of men." Thus—

"To* distinguish the matter-of-fact from the surrounding representation, and to deduce from it the doctrine which Almighty God would impart for the edification of men, is the office of the Church; while to fasten on the figurative accessories, and either on them to build an unessential dogma, or because of them to decry an essential verity, is the province of the blasphemers or the heretics. But this is exactly what the Swedenborgians have done in the doctrine of the great Advent of Christ to judge the earth."

So far as we can understand this statement, the

* *Swedenborgians*, p. 294.

“unessential dogma” is the *internal sense* of the Word, and the “essential verity” is the one great fact of the Personal Coming of our Lord into the material world, to judge the earth in the mere external sense; all spiritual interpretation of the expression, “coming in clouds,” being utterly excluded as belonging to the province of the blasphemer or heretic, on which subject Swedenborg thus remarks:—

“In* our Lord’s time the lawyers, or those skilled in the Mosaic Law, were the last to believe that anything in the Word had relation to the Lord. The lawyers of the present time know, indeed, but possibly they will be the last to believe, that there is a glory in the Word different from what appears in the letter, which letter, nevertheless, is the cloud wherein that glory is.”

Let us, however, now proceed to what the Vicar affirms is the Catholic teaching of the Church on this subject:—

1. “But† now let us turn to the Catholic teaching of the Church. There is no question whatever, but that the universal tradition has been that we are to look for a destruction of the world by *fire*.”

2. “It may be supposed that any ordinary person reading the second Epistle of St. Peter, and with the Church, considering it an inspired book, would naturally and inevitably come to the conclusion that this world in which we live, the elements around us, the earth, seas, heavens, in short, *all which constitutes our Universe (!)* is intended and decreed by Almighty God to be destroyed, and come to an end by the operation of *fire*; and that this destruction is to take place in combination with the day on which our Blessed Lord will come to judge the earth.”

* *Arcana Cœlestia*, Preface to Genesis, chap. xviii. † Pages 299, 309.

All this is expressly announced, according to the Vicar, on the authority of St. Peter; and is said to be the one great fact which it is the office of the Church to deduce from its figurative accessories "for the edification of men." But there is one thing in which the Church of the latter days has, we fear, sadly neglected this office; for it is a universal tradition that, before this alleged destruction of the Universe, another Elijah is to appear, and, by a *special illumination*, to throw light upon the prophecies of Scripture—an event of which the Vicar takes no notice, but of which, in his account of the destruction of the earth by *fire*, Dr. Burnet, as we have seen, has taken particular notice.

And now let us proceed to consider the first "essential verity" so called, or that of the destruction of the world by *fire*.

In the book of Deuteronomy,* we read, "*For a fire is kindled in mine anger, and shall burn unto the lowest hell, and shall consume the earth with her increase, and set on fire the foundations of the mountains.*"

On these words, Dr. Lee, late Professor of Hebrew in the University of Cambridge, thus remarks:—

"This† is the first place in which this destruction by *fire* is mentioned; we shall, hereafter, find it frequently repeated in similar terms, which some have *imprudently imagined* foretells a conflagration of the physical world. Hence, no doubt, the notions of the Stoics that the world would be destroyed by fire."

2. Professor Lee afterwards thus comments on the words of St. Peter:—

* Chap. xxxii. 22.

† *An Enquiry into the Nature, Progress, and End of Prophecy*, p. 24.

“It* is true St. Peter tells us here of a dissolution of the heavens and of the elements *by fire*; which, if taken literally, received not their accomplishment in his days. But, it may be asked, Is it absolutely necessary that they should be so taken? If we examine the numerous prophecies relating to this particular period, we shall find, I think, that they cannot be taken literally. See, for example, Deut. xxxii. 22, as already noticed,—*For a fire is kindled in mine anger, and shall burn to the lowest hell, etc.*, after which, we find, *the nations shall rejoice with his people*. The physical world could not, therefore, be so consumed. The same is the case here in St. Peter, v. 13, *Nevertheless we, according to this promise (i.e., as given in the Scriptures of the Prophets), look for new heavens and a new earth, etc.*, that is, *a new creation*, mystically speaking. On this subject, see, too, Isaiah i. 7; xiii. 13; xxiv. 6; xxxiv. 4, *seq.*, with the parallel places, which must be quite sufficient to remove every doubt as to the true drift of all such places.”†—“So, also, St. Peter, 2 Ephes. iii. 10,—*The heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat; the earth also, and the works that are therein, shall be burned up*: which, according to this Apostle, should take place within “*the day of God*;” while he, with his brethren, looked for a *new heaven and a new earth*, wherein should dwell *righteousness*. Not heavens with an earth *physically* new, or differently located, but *mystically* new, *i.e.*, a *mystical* or *spiritual* new creation.”

‡ “St. Peter goes on (*Ibid.* v. 13)—*Nevertheless, we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness*. It was, therefore, a

* *An Enquiry into the Nature, Progress, and End of Prophecy*, p. 111.

† *Ibid.*, p. 277.

‡ *Ibid.*, 479.

new spiritually renewed world for which St. Peter and his brethren looked, not for a physical one. He looked for it, moreover, according to the terms of *promise*; and where are we to look for these except in the Prophets? But we know the spirit of all these was *the testimony of Jesus*; not any particulars relating to the physical world. And, again, St. Peter and his brethren looked for this state *on earth*, not *in heaven*, and we shall presently see from the Revelation that it is from heaven and *to earth* that it descends. And, once more, the period here had in view has, according to the requirements of prophecy, as already shewn, long ago passed, and no such physical change has appeared. It is, therefore, *a new moral and religious world* that is here spoken of; such was, as we have seen, to take place; and such, upon the establishment of the *New Covenant*, in a strictly spiritual sense, actually did.”

Hence, on a corresponding passage in the book of Revelation, Dr. Lee thus observes:—

“ ‘ And* I saw,’ says St. John, ‘ *a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away, and there was no more sea.*’ We were told above, that *the old earth and heaven fled away, and that there was found no place for them*; not that the *physical* heavens and earth had so disappeared—this would be absurd to suppose, as to the events here in question,—but that the *old moral system* so passed away, in order to make room for a better, termed, in the mystical language of Scripture, *a new creation*, as already shewn.”

Hence Dr. Lee constantly maintains that the “ new heaven and new earth ” imply, of necessity, a new Dispensation, and consequently a new Church.†

* *An Enquiry into the Nature, Progress, and End of Prophecy*, p. 475.

† Pages 140, 482, 486, 493, etc.

It is true, indeed, that he limits the prophecy of St. Peter to the past, or to the times of that Apostle; the question therefore now is, whether the prophecy in any way applies to the future. The Vicar himself, and the Church in general, positively maintain that it does, and in this respect we perfectly agree with them. The next question is, whether, after all, the words of St. Peter will legitimately bear the interpretation here given? The answer is, we conceive, that Dr. Lee has clearly shewn that this and no other is the real meaning of the prophecy. But, in this respect, he stands not alone. Even in the days of Dr. Burnet, who was the most celebrated advocate of the literal sense, there were those who refused to accept this literal interpretation, and who preferred the moral and spiritual, or what they called the figurative and allegorical. As to the literal sense,—

“We* think it a great matter,” says Dr. Burnet, “to see a single person burnt alive: here are millions shrieking in the air at once. It is frightful to us to look upon a great city in flames, and to see the distractions and misery of the people; here is a universal fire throughout all the cities of the earth, and a universal massacre of the inhabitants. Whatsoever the Prophets foretold of the desolations of Judæa, Jerusalem, or Babylon (*Isaiah xxiv., Jer. li., Lament.*) in the highest strains, is more than literally accomplished in the last and general calamity; and those only that are spectators of it can make its history.”

The spectators of it, according to Dr. Cumming and others, are the saints who are caught up to meet the Lord in the air, where they are out of the reach of the smoke and burning below; and this is the sort of interpretation

* *The Sacred Theory of the Earth*, vol. ii., p. 147. Seventh edition,

which the Vicar himself maintains to be that of the Catholic Church, and in support of which he adduces the following authority of St. Augustine :—

“ If,* after the judgment is made, the world will be burned up before the new heavens and the new earth are set in their place, some one may, perhaps, ask where the saints are to be in the time of the conflagration, since it follows, of necessity, that being endued with bodies, they must have some bodily place? We answer, that they will be in those upper parts whither the flames of the burning will not reach ; just as there were plains whither the waters of the flood did not reach.”

Now, in reply to all these naturalistic notions, what have we to say? We have only to repeat the interpretation of St. Peter's prophecy, which has already been given ; which every clergyman is at full liberty to adopt ; and according to which it is not the material heavens and earth which are to pass away, but the old Dispensation, the old Moral and Religious System ; and, as such, the old interpretations of Scripture proper to that system, such as the external and materialistic interpretations just given. These and the like are the old things which are to pass away ; and for which, in the new order of things, or the new moral and religious system, no place is to be found. This interpretation of St. Peter's prophecy, we repeat, every clergyman is at full liberty to adopt ; but if, notwithstanding, any Church should still adhere to the old interpretations, it must share the fate of the old Moral and Religious system.

* *Swedenborgians*, page 311.

II.

We now proceed to consider the further charges brought by the Editor against Swedenborg on the subject of the Last Judgment.

There is, at the Last Judgment, according to Swedenborg, a personal Advent in the spiritual world, and not a personal Advent in the material; and this, as we have seen, the Editor interprets to mean a denial that there shall be any personal Advent at all; it is "to decry an essential verity which is the province of the blasphemer and the heretic." But "why is the decree so hasty from the king?" Dan. iii. 15; for who denies the fact of a personal Advent? The point in which Swedenborg is here differing from the Catholic theology, is not that of a personal Advent, but of the world in which it takes place. The popular theology teaches that the Second Advent takes place in the natural world; Swedenborg, that it takes place in the spiritual, because it is the spiritual world which is the scene of Judgment, and the subjects of the Judgment are men possessed of spiritual bodies; the spiritual world being for spiritual bodies, as the material world is for material bodies, and there being no resurrection of the flesh, or of the material body, as already shewn.

Although, however, the popular theology regards the Second Advent as taking place in the material world; yet if, as the Editor says,* the Catholic is bound to believe only in the *one great fact* set forth in the Creeds, of a personal Advent "to judge both the quick and the dead," he is not at all bound to believe also that the scene of the Judgment is the material world; for the Creeds say nothing about it, and so far as these are concerned, he is free

* *Swedenborgians*, page 294.

to believe that it is the spiritual world which is the scene of the Second Advent, and still be a very good Catholic.

The reason for which the popular theology regards the material world as the scene of the Second Advent, is derived from an erroneous literal interpretation of Scripture. But the Editor admits,* “that it is true, as urged by the ‘Swedenborgian’ writers, that the descriptions given of the Last Judgment throughout the Sacred Writings involve *a great many* particulars which must of necessity be figurative, and any idea of making them real involves either a degradation of our Blessed Lord, or an absurdity.” What then are these particulars which the Editor calls “a great many?” What rule does he furnish by which we are to know what is to be taken in the literal and what in the figurative sense? As to the expressions, “*coming in clouds,*” “*blowing trumpets,*” “*riding on a white horse,*” sitting on a “*throne,*” or a “*seat of judgment,*” and having “*books opened*”—“Why, of course,” says the Editor, “we are not for an instant to think that such descriptions as these are any other than figurative. There is not a child who reads his Bible but perfectly well understands them as such.” Well, then—what are we to say of turning “the sun into darkness,” the “moon into blood,” of the “falling of the stars from heaven,” the “burning of the world,” the “passing away of the heavens and earth;” are these expressions, also, mere figurative accessories and poetical colouring?

This is the point at issue, and it is important to observe how the Editor, who writes as the representative of the Catholic Church, when pressed closely upon this subject, would solve the difficulty. It is the office of the Church, says he,† “to distinguish the matter of fact from the sur-

* *Ibid.*, page 292.

† *Ibid.*, page 294.

rounding pictorial representation.”...“The Church says we have nothing to do with these things as a *Creed*. We are merely to embrace *the one great fact* which is unquestionably announced. The Church does not put it into the mouths of her children to say,—‘I believe that Jesus Christ shall come in positive, real earthly clouds, such as surround our globe, or positively and really riding on a white horse, or that there shall be positive written or printed books out of which men are to be judged;’ but merely this, ‘I believe that Jesus Christ has ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God, from whence He shall come (in glory) to judge the quick and the dead.’”...“Out of all the *poetical colouring* and figurative signs and emblems of the event which is announced, She places before us *the one great fact*. That *one great fact* is enough for us to dwell upon, to anticipate, and to *believe*. The rest is immaterial, as merely words descriptive of an idea.”

This being the case, it is of course unnecessary to believe that the material world is the scene of the Second Advent; for the Church does not put it into the mouths of her children to say,—‘I believe that Jesus Christ shall come into this material world to judge the quick and the dead; and that when He comes the sun shall be literally turned into darkness, the moon into blood, the stars shall fall from heaven, and heaven and earth be burned up.’ All that the Church requires us to believe is only *the one great fact* of a personal Coming,—which “is enough for us to dwell upon and to anticipate,—the rest is immaterial.”

Suppose, however, we pass from the Creed to the Catholic interpretations of Scripture, and admit with the Editor, for the sake of argument, that some of the expres-

sions relating to the Second Advent are figurative and some literal.

First—as to the figurative expressions.

It is the teaching of the Catholic Church that those expressions in the prophecies which refer to the dissolution of the former heaven and earth, and the creation of a new heaven and earth, when applied to the Jewish religion, signify the passing away of the Jewish Church and Dispensation and the introduction of such as are New. When, therefore, the Catholic Church comes to similar expressions which are admitted to relate to its own Dispensation, why not give them a similar interpretation? Why say that in the case of the *Jewish Church* the prophetic descriptions are indeed figurative, but in the case of *our own Church* they are merely literal, or else poetical accessories out of which it is the office of the Church to pick and cull only the one great fact of a personal Coming? Is not the reason obvious? Is it not clear that for the Catholic Church to interpret prophecies admitted to relate to the present Dispensation, after the same manner in which she interprets *similar expressions* in relation to the Jewish, would only be for her to read her own destinies in the handwriting upon the wall? Therefore, since *all* the expressions are not mere “poetical colouring,” it is well, in the next place, to be loud upon the literal sense of the others, such as “the falling of the stars from heaven,” and the “burning up of the world,” etc.: and why? Because till that time comes (for which we may all wait long enough) the Church may feel herself perfectly secure. Whereas, if she had interpreted these phenomena, as she does in the case of the Jewish Church, to indicate a change in the Economy, instead of directing her children to gaze up into the material heaven she would have invited their

attention to her own spiritual condition, her sense of present security would be less confident, while the claims of Tradition, Church authority, and antiquity, would be pleaded with, perhaps, some misgivings: in fine, the *Ecclesia docens* would be far more teachable.

It need not give any offence then to say, that it is a matter of self-interest to the Church to be faithful in her office of interpreting prophecy in favour of herself; especially as, in some cases, the fact is openly avowed. We cannot, say the Catholics of the English Church, affirm that the Church of Rome is Babylon, because this would be to make our own Church insecure.

Now the interpretations which Swedenborg has given to those prophecies which relate to the present Dispensation, are *substantially the same* as those which the Catholic Church has given to similar prophecies regarding the Jewish. The former proceeds upon a uniform system of interpretation in both cases; the latter is obliged to select expressions in such a manner as shall best enable her to come out of her interpretation with safety. If, therefore, any one depends upon the Church for a faithful interpretation of Scripture respecting the Second Advent, it may be well for him to consider how far it may have been the predisposition of interpreters to lead him to wait for it as long as possible, and hence to look out for that which it is not likely will ever happen.

We say *not likely!* for after he has been waiting these eighteen hundred years for the destruction of the earth, of the solar system, and of the material universe, what can be his feelings when he is at last told—

“Here,* namely, then, we see all the expressions used

* Whitby's *Comments*, *Preface to*, 2 Pet. iii.; Isaiah xiii. 9—li. 6; Deut. xxxii. 22; Jer. iv. 23; Joel ii. 30—iii. 15.

in the third chapter of St. Peter used also by the prophets, when they speak of the desolation of a *nation* and *people*, and especially of the *enemies of the Church*; which is sufficient to evince, that the Apostle, being himself a Jew, and writing to those Jews who were accustomed to these expressions, might thus set forth the great *destruction of the Beast* mentioned in Revelations, chap. xvii. and xviii.; and by the ‘new heavens and new earth’ that *glorious state of the Church* which was to ensue by the conversion of the Jewish nation, and the flowing in of all nations to them.”

“I* cannot but feel astonishment,” says Dr. Pye Smith, “that any serious and intelligent man should have his mind fettered with the common, I might call it the vulgar notion of the proper destruction of the earth; and some seem to extend the notion to the whole solar system; applying the idea of an extinction of being, a reduction to nothingness. This notion has, indeed, been often used to aid impassioned descriptions in sermons and poetry; and thus it has gained so strong a hold upon the feelings of many pious persons that they have made it an article of their faith. But I confess myself unable to find any evidence for it in nature, reason, or Scripture.”

What a fatal blow to nine-tenths of the Sermons preached at the solemn season of Advent! Can we be otherwise than reminded of the words of the prophet—“The leaders of the people cause them to err?” Isaiah ix. 16.

But this, the Editor intimates, is not *quite* the meaning of the Catholic Church, which does not imply that there will be an extinction of being or a reduction to nothingness;†

* *Lectures on Scripture and Geology*, by Dr. Pye Smith, p. 233.

† *Swedenborgians*, p. 305.

for—"there may be still left existing the *essence of the creation*, which may come out and survive the fire of the Last Day, as it did survive the water of the flood."—The "*essence of creation*," which is neither soluble in water, nor evaporable by fire! according to some a *caput mortuum* of creation, vitreous and transparent! Is this the grave instruction of the Catholic Church? With unfeigned respect to the Editor of *The Old Church Porch*, we cannot but conceive that when he is talking about "the essence of creation," and identifying the teaching of Jerome, Cyprian, and Augustine, with that of the lowest school of theology in the present day, he is only leading thoughtful and intelligent minds to doubt the whole system of his alleged Catholic interpretation upon this subject—from beginning to end.

But, it will be said, there is another and stronger argument in favour of these interpretations; for,* "To all practical intents and purposes, as Noah and the flood, so will the coming of the Son of Man be." . . . "All analogy derived from the past, leads us to this conclusion as to the future—what God *has* done He *will* do. What we know, from His own Word, *has* taken place once, *will* most likely, under the same circumstances, take place again."

What, then, was it that took place in the time of Noah? The Editor thus describes it:† "It may be, indeed, that in the Flood there was only a revolution or change of the nature of the old world in its passage into the new, and that it was not utterly annihilated. It may be that in its essence and component parts it remained, and was, as it were, brought to life again in a kind of resurrection; but still we always speak of it as a *new*

* *Swedenborgians*, page 305.

† *Ibid.*, page 304.

world. Everything of the old was disorganized and confounded ; all life was swept away : and, except those specially chosen for safety, animal, vegetable, and material things were alike destroyed, and no vestige of the old world is carried* on in the new as the work of man.”

In fact, says the Editor,† at this period “the whole constituted arrangement of Creation underwent a *chaotic destruction*, and ceased for the time to be.” This description, of course, was requisite in order to establish the analogy between the destruction by water and the destruction by fire.

Let us now compare this account of the Flood with the one given in the *Biblical Cyclopædia*.‡ “It is chiefly to be remarked, that the whole event is represented as both commencing and terminating in the most gradual and quiet manner, without anything at all resembling the catastrophes and convulsions often pictured in vulgar imagination as accompanying it. When the waters subsided, so little was the surface of the earth changed, that the vegetation continued uninjured : the olive trees remained from which the dove brought its token.”

These circumstances are inferred from the narrative as interpreted only in the literal sense. But what as to the argument drawn from the universality of the Flood to the universality of the conflagration? The *Biblical Cyclopædia* thus continues : “Upon the whole, it is thus apparent that we have no evidence whatever of any great aqueous revolution having affected the earth’s surface over any considerable tract ; changes doubtless may have been produced, on a *small scale*, in *isolated districts*. . . In any point of view it must be admitted that the subject in-

* There seems, in this close of the sentence, to be some misprint.

† *Ibid.*, page 306.

‡ By Dr. Kitto, article *Deluge*.

volves difficulties of no inconsiderable amount; and if, after due consideration of the suggestions offered for their solution, we should still feel it necessary to retain a cautious suspense of judgment on the subject, it may be also borne in mind that such hesitation will not involve the dereliction of any material religious doctrine."

The reader is here plainly taught, that if he is constrained by evidence, or want of evidence, to doubt the fact of any such Flood having *literally* taken place, he may safely do so without peril to any material religious doctrine:—a plain instance in which the old Catholic teaching is dying out with the olden times, and a New Era is bringing in a new order of ideas.

The truth is, that, upon the subject of the *Flood*, the Vicar has been opposing the teaching of Swedenborg by having recourse to obsolete interpretations, which accordingly have been generally abandoned even in the Church of England itself. "The most literal interpretation of the language," says *The Speaker's Commentary*, especially of the words, Gen. vii. 19, 'All the high hills that were under the whole heaven were covered,' would lead to the conviction that it must have been universal. Yet it is certain that many who accept implicitly the historical truth of the narrative, believed the inundation to have been partial."

Now, according to Swedenborg, the Flood was as universal as the wickedness, and the wickedness as universal as the Flood; for the wickedness was the Flood. Mount Ararat, like other mountains and hills, such as Olivet, Bashan, Gilead, Sinai, Tabor, Hermon, Lebanon, etc., had, in those days, a prophetic signification as being part of a prophetic country; and, hence, the Flood itself was of a similar character, such as we read of in Psalm

lxix.: “Save me, O God, for the *waters* are come in unto my soul. I sink in deep mire, where there is no standing; I am come into *deep waters*, where the *floods* overflow me. . . . Deliver me out of the mire, and let me not sink: let me be delivered from them that hate me, and out of the *deep waters*. Let not the *waterflood* overflow me, neither let the *deep* swallow me up, and let not the pit shut her mouth upon me.”

The universality of this Flood, in the time of Noah, as thus interpreted, will, we apprehend, not in the least assist the Editor’s argument; for it has no relation to his view of the subject.

But there is another and final argument which is very popular upon this subject.

The destruction of the earth by fire, and, as it would appear, of the solar system also, is said to be a matter of Divine justice: the Editor is speaking as a priest of the Catholic Church: “It is the sins of men,” says he,* “which have brought upon the earth the punishment of a justly offended God; and it has never happened but that long continued and obstinate rejection of His laws have ended in destruction;” . . . therefore,† “His Divine Love, great as it is, must, in its very nature, become indignation, and wrath, and punishment; when, after all its tenders of mercy, it is rejected and despised by those for whose very sake it has suffered all things.”

This, then, is the alleged Catholic teaching with respect to the state of the Church at the Second Advent; and, hence, according to this teaching—

“It is not true that the blessings of knowledge and spiritual light are reserved for the final coming of our Lord to judge the earth; on the contrary, it is said that

* *Swedenborgians*, page 304.

† *Ibid.*, page 306.

the *perfect light* of the Gospel, as far as human imperfection can embrace it, is to be spread over the whole earth *before* the Judgment Day shall arrive; and that heresies, and schisms, and sins, and idolatry shall cease *before* His coming." The confusion in the "Swedenborgian" theory, he continues, has arisen from not acknowledging or perceiving this great distinction between the two Advents which the Church has ever made.

According to this account, it is the doctrine of the Catholic Church, in opposition to that of Swedenborg, that it is the *light* of the Church which comes first in order, and that this light is proper to the First Advent; the *darkness* of the Church is to follow after, and continue down to the End of all things; whereas, just the contrary is stated by others who claim to be as Catholic as the Editor. Thus, when speaking of the period when the knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth, as waters cover the sea, it is observed in one of the *Sermons* on the Reunion of Christendom*;—

"But when? When shall these glorious Scriptures, which tell of the exceeding gladness and prosperity of the Church, her unity, her majesty and dominion, her joyous and beneficent rule over the nations of the earth, and their willing submission to her sway, when shall they all be realized? *Before* the Second Coming of Christ, or *after*? *Not* before, but *after*."

"Or, to speak more correctly, only in a very faint and imperfect measure before, as though by way of earnest and foretaste, not in their fullness and reality till *after*."

"The Gospel of the Kingdom must, even before Christ comes, be preached in all the world, not with any

* *By Members of the Roman Catholic, Oriental, and Anglican Communions*, page 267, vol. i.

revealed prospect of converting the whole world, but “for a *witness* unto all nations, and then shall the end come. God shall visit the Gentiles to take out of *them* a people for His name. But it is not till a *New Dispensation* that all kings shall fall down to Him, all nations do Him service,” etc.

In these remarks we find presented the same view of the subject which is taken by Swedenborg. The *end*, when it comes, is followed by a *New Dispensation*; but, according to the Vicar, it is followed by a conflagration of the universe, and the idea of a new dispensation is ignored. We have already described the moral and spiritual state of Christendom at the period when the *end* was brought about, and from which there commenced a new era; so that darkness really preceded the Last Judgment, as the Editor says, but it has been followed by a new Dispensation—a Dispensation of light: when, as Bishop Horsley anticipated,* “the destined period shall arrive for that clearer knowledge of the Almighty, and of His ways, which seems to be promised to the last ages of the Church.” Indeed, in his *Biblical Criticism*† on Isaiah, this Prelate observes, “that ‘*to stretch out the heavens and lay the foundation of the earth,*’ denotes those great changes for the better, in ecclesiastical and civil politics, in religion and morals, which are to take place in the very last period of the Church on earth;”—thus inverting the order maintained by the Editor in his argument against Swedenborg, and confirming that of Swedenborg himself.

When, therefore, the Editor claims the authority of the Catholic Church for his own particular view of the subject, in opposition to that of Swedenborg, will he allow

* *Sermons*, page 174.

† Vol. i., p. 434.

us to say, that he is claiming for the Catholic Church that which the Church never claimed for itself, namely, an authoritative and final interpretation of prophecy, which is to serve as a rule throughout all ages ;—which amounts to a prohibition of prophecy from subsequently fulfilling itself, except in the one particular sense predetermined by the Church from the beginning.

To proceed, however, from the Catholic Church to one branch of it, the Church of England.

The Collect for the Third Sunday in Advent is as follows : “ O Lord Jesus Christ ! who at thy First Coming didst send thy messenger to prepare thy way before thee, Grant that the ministers and stewards of thy mysteries may likewise so prepare and make ready thy way, by turning the hearts of the disobedient to the wisdom of the just ; that at thy Second Coming to judge the world, we may be found an acceptable people in thy sight, who livest and reignest with the Father and the Holy Spirit, ever one God, world without end.”—Here, then, a parallel is presumed between John the Baptist on the one hand, and the ministers and stewards of the Divine mysteries on the other, that is to say, the clergy of the Catholic Church. What then is the parallel ? John was the precursor of a new Dispensation ; the ministers and stewards should be precursors of a new Dispensation. John was the messenger of a new covenant : the ministers and stewards should be messengers of a new covenant, and as in the one case so in the other, “ In that he saith a *new* covenant, he hath made the first *old*. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away,” Heb. viii. 13.—Wherein then do the ministers and stewards of the present day lose sight of the parallel ? They preach that the Church is to last as long as this material world. Now this was not the

preaching of John, but of the Jewish Church to which John was sent. John might have told them that their Church and Dispensation were coming to an end; and they might have answered out of the Law that their Church abideth for ever. Let us take the language which John might have preached to the Jews, and which the clergy of the present day might preach to Christians: and suppose John to be addressing the Jews thus:—

“Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. For he cometh, for he cometh to judge the earth:* yea, the Lord when he cometh shall come suddenly to his temple. But who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth; for he is like a refiner’s fire, and like fullers’ soap.† Every battle of the warrior is with confused noise and garments rolled in blood; but this shall be with burning and fuel of fire.‡ And the Lord will shew wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath; blood and fire and vapour of smoke: the sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before that great and notable day of the Lord come.§ Heaven and earth, saith the Lord, shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away;|| for behold, I create new heavens and a new earth, and the former shall not be remembered nor come into mind.”¶

Here, then, is language applicable and *actually applied* both to the First and Second Advents. Suppose, now, we pursue the parallel as follows:

“Then came unto him the Scribes and Pharisees asking him questions, and saying unto him; Master, what meanest thou by these wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath, and blood and fire and vapour of

* Psalm xcvi. 13.

† Mal. iii. 1, 2.

‡ Isa. ix. 5.

§ Acts ii. 19, 20.

|| Mark xiii. 31.

¶ Isa. lxxv. 17.

smoke, and the passing away of the heavens and earth? Then said John unto them, Be not deceived: all these things shall ye behold in *this world of matter* with your *bodily eyes*. Then cried out the Pharisees: Our temple, and our church, and our nation, then, shall last till we see all these things *thus* come to pass! Then answered John and said, Even so; until ye see all these things fulfilled in *this* manner, the Romans shall not come and take away your place and nation."

Assuredly, if John had thus put the Jews upon looking out for the literal fulfilment of these Scripture expressions, in what sense could it be said either that he was the messenger of a new covenant, or preparing the way of the Lord? He might have been preaching to this very day; and after their Church and Economy had passed away, the Jews might still have been looking out, with our modern interpreters of prophecy, for signs and wonders in the heavens, and blood and fire and vapour of smoke, and a new heaven and earth formed out of the residuary "*essence of the Creation;*" and what in such a case would have been said? Not that John had prepared the way of the Lord, but that he had misled those whom he had been sent to teach.

"What* must be the effect," says Dr. Pye Smith, "upon minds possessing some knowledge of the natural arrangements of Jehovah's work, but deplorably ignorant of the moral system (and, alas! there are many such in all ranks of society), if they suppose that a part of the faith of evangelical Christians consists in believing that *the sky will one day be rolled up like a scroll of parchment, and the heavenly bodies drop down upon earth!* Permit me, my respected friends, and you my honoured brethren in the

* *Interpretation of Prophecy*, p. 30.

sacred ministry, most earnestly to implore that you would direct your efforts, in all public and private modes of communicating truth, to the rooting out of these *pernicious forms of ignorance!* No language can describe the *ruin to the souls* of young and imperfectly educated persons, and the *dishonour to the sacred cause of Revelation*, that has accrued from its professed advocates misrepresenting the contents of that Revelation, and leaving it to be inferred that any of them are at a variance with the demonstrated truths of Science.”

Well, then, if the passing away of the heavens and earth is not to be understood in the literal sense, what does it denote? “The declaration in Scripture,” says the same author, “that *the heavens and earth shall flee away and no more place be found for them*, Rev. xx. 11, is undoubtedly *figurative*, and denotes the most *momentous changes* in the scenes of the Divine moral government.”* But what are these changes? The question is thus answered in the *Family Bible* published by the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge; Isaiah lxv. 17: “*For behold I create new heavens and a new earth*; that is, in prophetic language, will institute a *New Dispensation of Religion*, different from that which God had given to the Jews, and subversive of it; for it follows, *The former shall not be remembered nor come into mind.*”

These *momentous changes* mean then, after all, the introduction of a *New Dispensation of Religion*, and the transition from the Old to the New. Now it is generally admitted that the passages in Rev. xx. 11; xxi. 1, refer to the present Dispensation, and, in fact, to the close of it; this, consequently, was what Bishop Butler and Bishop

* *Scripture and Geology*, p. 225.

Van Mildert must have been referring to when they apprehended the close of the Dispensation; and it will be for the critic to separate, if he can, this close of the Dispensation from the Last Judgment.

Within the last few years the spirit of Catholicism has been in the ascendant, and the Church of England has freely acknowledged the degenerate state into which she had fallen; but it is remarkable that during this period of Catholic revival the mouth of prophecy has been well-nigh closed. Nothing is said *now* about a change of Dispensation; the one grand remedy *now* for all existing evils is the revival and proclamation upon the housetops of the claims of the Church; no change *now* of the Dispensation! for it is evident that to give *this* interpretation to the words of prophecy, and to preach *this* doctrine, would militate against the very Church whose claims are advocated. Accordingly, the way *now* is by no means that of many theologians in the last century,* to apprehend a close of the Dispensation; the judicious preacher observes a profound silence on this subject, leaving his congregation to find out the truth for themselves; or else, if the silence be broken—inasmuch as the question is between, on the one hand, the passing away of the *Universe*, and on the other, the passing away of the *Church*—he considers it to be the safer theory, as a sound Catholic and a zealous Churchman, that, as we have seen, the whole Creation, constellations and all worlds, the solar system and all planets, kingdoms of the earth and all seas, “mountains and all hills, fruitful trees and all cedars,” which are ever praising the name of the Lord,

* Pyle's *Paraphrase upon the Apocalypse*, chap. xxi., is worth reading upon this particular subject, especially as having been written only a few years before Swedenborg wrote.

should be hurled down into some pit of smoke and burning, rather than that one jot or tittle of the claims of the Church should fail. It may be that he may say, "I preach not the total but the partial destruction of the universe;" but he is a bold Churchman, we think, who, from the pulpit, would stretch out his measuring-line over the heavens, in order to parcel out to his congregation what is to be destroyed and what is not. It is however certain that while Dr. Burnet shrinks from including the whole universe in the conflagration, the Vicar of Frome has no such misgivings.

Turn we, then, to the teaching of Swedenborg. He tells the Christian Church, what the Christian tells the Jewish, that the passing away of the heavens and the earth means the passing away of the Church and Dispensation; and that as the Jews knew not the time of their visitation, so neither does the Catholic Church. And yet one might have supposed that in a former age of the most consummate infidelity, acknowledged to be brought on chiefly by the corruptions of the Church, it ought to have been deemed no such strange thing that the Dispensation should come to a close: nor, indeed, was it so considered by the divines of that time. "In France," says *The Literary Churchman*,* "no words can describe the religious condition but those terrible ones of the Hebrew Prophet, 'The whole head was sick, the whole heart faint; from the sole of the foot to the crown of the head, there was nought but wounds and bruises and putrifying sores.' " And has not the Church of England since ac-

* See the number of this periodical for January, 1858, and the Review of Lanfrey's work on *The Church and Philosophers of the Eighteenth Century*, which afterwards comes as a very suitable comment on its Article upon *Swedenborgianism*.

knowledged its own fallen and decayed state in the time of Wesley?* How many divines, moreover, both in the Church of England and out of it, have already told us, that Six of the Apocalyptic trumpets have already sounded, and that we are on the eve of the Seventh. Yet who has objected, on the ground that no one has heard them, or has yet seen the fiery horses, or locusts in armour? Now, if the Six Trumpets have sounded and no one has heard them, why may not the Seventh and no one have heard it; and why may not there have been a *Coming in clouds* and no one have discerned it; and the Throne have been set and no one have seen it; and Judgment have begun at the House of God and no one have witnessed it; and the heavens and earth have fled away, and the Church been fast asleep? The Catholic Church tells the Jews that the heavens and earth passed away in their time without their knowing it; and a teacher, claiming to be sent from God, tells the Catholic Church that the same kind of thing has taken place in its own day without the Church knowing it.

Suppose that Paul had gone to the High Priest, or to Gamaliel, and had said: "I come to announce to you a great revolution going on in the spiritual world. Legions of spirits who had infested men upon earth, have rushed down into Hell.† To others which were in prison a certain One has gone down from this earth to preach.‡ Satan has been seen as lightning falling from heaven.§ A judgment has been performed in the world of spirits,|| and hosts of evil spirits have been driven from the confines of

* See, *passim*, *The English Church of the Eighteenth Century*, by the Rev. C. J. Abbey and the Rev. J. H. Overton.

† Matt. viii. 32.

‡ 1 Peter iii. 19.

§ Luke x. 18.

|| John xvi. 11.

heaven, cast down from their abodes, and consigned to their places in the regions below.”* What would the High Priest or Gamaliel have said but just what the masters in Israel say of a like case in the present day, “Paul, thou art beside thyself; much learning hath made thee mad?” Yet this, nevertheless, is exactly what the Apostle thus declares took place.—“When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men”. . . . “and having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a show of them openly,” etc.† It was not till captivity was led captive that these gifts descended unto men; not till the dark clouds of infernal spirits had been removed that the rays of Love and Wisdom from the Sun of Righteousness could come down into the human mind, and produce that increase of light, and love, and holiness and spiritual progress which a Last Judgment or a New Dispensation alone could account for.

We only affirm that parallel events have taken place in the present day; another change in the spiritual world, in virtue of which another phase of Christianity has commenced upon earth. For as the spiritual world is the world of causes, so the Book of Revelation, as relating to that world, is a Book of Causes; and as that Book relates to the Last Judgment, so it is the fulfilment of the prophecy of that Book which is the cause of the present state of the world. In speaking of the principalities and powers that were spoiled, the Apostle was speaking of the Apocalypse of the Jewish Dispensation. Of this Apocalypse we have only brief hints and intimations, because mankind in general were not then in a state to know more: they had, for the most part, to learn the elementary truths of Christianity, and even the commonest principles of mo-

* Col. ii. 15.

† Ephes. iv. 8.

rality itself. The case is now different. The Apocalypse of the Christian Dispensation is set before us in full, though long time has it been like the handwriting upon the wall; there is a far greater capacity of instruction now than there was among our predecessors; the very discoveries of science are gradually laying a broader and surer foundation of knowledge in the rational mind, and are thus connected with the universal movement and progress.

The intimations of the Apostle respecting the changes in the spiritual world were no Gnostic fables, no mere day-dreams of a disordered fancy; they had their foundation in the laws of Divine Order, in virtue of which the natural and spiritual worlds are inseparably connected with each other; and this is the fundamental principle upon which the teaching of Swedenborg is based. However isolated may appear some of his narratives, "all are but parts of one stupendous whole;" all have their places in one vast system of harmony and order arising out of these essential characteristics of the Divine Dispensations.

Suppose, then, the *Coming in clouds* should happen to mean, what the Catholic Church has admitted it *may* mean,—THE OPENING OF THE INTERIOR SENSE OF THE WORD OF GOD; the *sounding of Trumpets*, the *communication of Divine Truth* for the purposes of Judgment; it is obvious that, so far as these circumstances are concerned, both the Second Advent and the Last Judgment may have taken place, and yet the Church may not have known the time of her visitation. Thus might prophecy be fulfilled, and the fulfilment be regarded with profound indifference; the Wisdom of Angels be unfolded in the Word of God, and the Catholic Church neither know nor care anything about it; the interpretations of a teacher sent from God be true, and the truth be involved in that

cloud which, while it gave light to the Israelites, was to the Egyptians the densest darkness.

But it may be asked, what *positive* evidence have we of the Second Coming of the Lord? We answer, the positive fact of His *Coming in clouds*. What further evidence can you want? If the Church believes that He shall *come in clouds*, does she believe, also, that this sight of Him will not be sufficient; but that when He comes, miracles will be required to prove it? Would not every one rather say in this case, "No miracles for me; I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold and not another." And if this be the case naturally, why not spiritually? Why, when the enlightened intellect sees a plain truth, as plain to its own eyes as natural objects are to the natural eyes, must it demand a miracle to prove the existence of what it already sees? But it will be said, perhaps, We do not see it. Certainly, we reply, you cannot if you do not look for it. But suppose the Church should look into this alleged interior sense of the Word of God, and say, "We see here no coming in clouds; we see nothing but heresy."—And what is the heresy? That *Baptism is not Regeneration*. Have ye never read, "For judgment am I come into the world; that they which see not might see, and that they which see might be made blind?" According to Swedenborg, Baptism is a sacramental sign of the introduction of the baptized into the Christian Church, as also of his being placed under the guardianship of angels, under which he is gradually to become regenerate, but not that by baptism he is made so at once. This being the case, what is it that by baptism the Catholic Church undertakes, but to regenerate a man sooner than God? What with the Lord is represented as a work of patience, long suffering, entreaty, forbearance, a seeming failure to-day,

a slight progress to-morrow, and never less than a six days' labour, a work of warfare between Hell on one side and Heaven on the other, is accomplished by the Church in a few minutes,* affording no opportunity for the display of Divine Wisdom, but only of the suddenness of sovereign Power; so that what with Baptismal regeneration in the Catholic Church, and Justification by faith alone in the Protestant, the great work of being "fearfully and wonderfully made" has become a very slight and transient affair. For you cannot speak of the *process* of Regeneration, it has no process: it is ended as soon as begun: it is sudden, simultaneous, effected before you can enquire into it; once and for ever passed, before you know what it is. Now a work thus perfected by the Church in a few minutes, can scarcely be expected to be the grand theme of the Word of God; that mighty work of Almighty Wisdom over which the morning stars are singing, and the sons of God are shouting for joy. What marvel, then, that on looking into the internal sense of the Word of God, the Church should exclaim, "We see the clouds, but not the Coming; we see only darkness visible?" for, according to Swedenborg, the interior sense of the Word of God treats of nothing else but the process of man's regeneration,—thus the state of the Church, and the corresponding Divine process of the glorification of the Lord's Humanity. Take away this interior sense, and what remains? what but "figurative accessories," "poetical colouring," places, persons, names, dates, and dead histories? And what, in this case,

* The Bishop of Bangor, for instance, in his Treatise on Baptism, defines the work of regeneration by baptism, as follows: "A pure act of God's special grace, immanent in Himself and terminating in man, limited and determined to a particular time, and incapable of latitude and increase."

is the Temple of the Word but a temple of words, a temple from which the Shechinah is gone? Let us depart hence, says the Spirit of Truth, and leave its echoes to repeat only—the Voice of the Church.

“*Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God;*” and if this being born again has now become such a technical affair, that even those whom the Scripture excludes from the kingdom of heaven may all, if baptized, be called regenerate; then, after all, as to the mystery of Regeneration, as nothing is known of it, so there can be nothing worth knowing; for as to any ascertainable change effected in the nature of the man, *regenerate* and *unregenerate* mean both the same. No wonder, therefore, that on looking for the interior sense of the Word of God concerning the process of Regeneration, the Church should see nothing—nothing for man to learn or the Lord to teach; although from beginning to end, according to Swedenborg, the Word treats of nothing else.

Let us, therefore, turn to the alleged heretical side of the question, in which *Regeneration* means something instead of nothing.

It is shewn by Swedenborg that, in the first chapter of Genesis, *heaven* and *earth* signify the internal and external man; and accordingly the *first state* of man, which is that of infancy, is purely sensuous and corporeal, and in regard to all spiritual things is represented as a void, emptiness, and thick darkness, over which the Divine mercy of the Lord is nevertheless ever brooding; a state which continues in after life in all who remain in ignorance or darkness as to spiritual things.—That in the *second state*, commencing with education, the person begins to learn what is true and good, and by light from above is enabled to distinguish it from error and evil; and

to perceive that what is true and good is from heaven above, and what is evil and false is from a man's own self-hood, or from the earth beneath.—That the *third state* begins when a man is thus enabled to repent of evil and error, and to do what is good and true, according to the knowledge he has acquired; although his knowledge of both is as yet external.—Hence, inasmuch as he is still in a state of self-love, it is shewn that the *fourth state* begins when the love of spiritual truth begins to enkindle the will, and its light to illuminate the understanding, but in such a manner that spiritual light or truth in the understanding precedes, as yet, love in the will; whence also varieties of spiritual states designated by *seasons, days, and years*.—That after this the *fifth state* begins, which is higher than any of the former, inasmuch as it is distinguished by a higher order of life, namely, the subjects of the animal kingdom, representing the life of spiritual knowledge, which now increases and multiplies in consequence.—But as hitherto the love of truth has preceded the love of good, so it is shewn that the *sixth state* begins from the love of good beginning to precede the love of truth; whence a state of spiritual conflict, which, when completed, gives rise to—the *seventh state*—the sabbatical man—the true image and likeness of God, who holds intercourse with the Lord and His angels.

Such is a very rude and general outline of the process of Regeneration; the second and third chapters of Genesis containing a further account of the sabbatical man, and of his fall from this paradisiacal state. These three chapters may therefore be said to be the foundation of the whole internal sense of the Word of God, in which consists its Divine Inspiration.

Accordingly Swedenborg says of those who may have

been led to doubt the Divine Inspiration of the first three chapters of Genesis, and even to deny it, in consequence of following out the merely literal interpretation, that these chapters are nevertheless Divinely inspired even to every iota;* for, says he, “Nevertheless it is to be noted, that all and each particular in that history, even to the smallest iota, are Divine, and contain in them arcana, which before the angels of heaven are as evident as in clear day. The reason of this is, because the angels do not see the sense of the Word according to the letter, but according to those things which are therein, which are things spiritual and celestial, and in these latter things Divine.”

This being the teaching of Swedenborg, the Vicar will take it in good part, if, when he says that Swedenborg asserts that “*the† three first chapters of Genesis have no authority,*” we charitably infer that he had never read a word in Swedenborg’s writings upon the subject. The same construction we put upon the Vicar’s next following statement, that Swedenborg asserts that “*the creation of Adam and Eve is nothing more than an allegory.*” Swedenborg nowhere asserts any such thing: the term *allegory* never once occurs. He shews, in the creation of Adam and Eve, how man, from being born natural, is by regeneration made spiritual, not how he is made allegorical. The first three chapters of Genesis contain the spiritual history of the most ancient Church, and consequently consist of historical truths.

Men will read treatises on the logic, the metaphysics, the philosophy of the human mind, but not one of these treatises explores it upon its true conditions; for while the external man is living in time, the spirit of man

* *Arcana Cælestia*, art. 8891.

† *Swedenborgians*, p. 274.

is living in eternity, and therefore heaven and hell are even now the conditions of his thoughts and affections ; and whatever philosophy of the human mind comes short of this, does not reach inwardly into the depths of a man's being, but is merely external and superficial.

Now all the foregoing states which man has to pass through in the process of Regeneration, the Lord fulfilled in Himself ; and by reason of being begotten of God, from these states He ascended into those which are Divine ; and as He glorified His humanity by passing through states corresponding to those of regeneration in man, so He is the Archetype of the regeneration of the humanity of the creature ; a regeneration which must have its lowest basis in the lowest, plainest, social, and moral duties of life ; the practical performance of which, in our several stations, is keeping the commandments, doing justly, loving mercy, and walking humbly with our God ; in virtue of which we come to that moral and spiritual perception by which we are enabled to judge of any doctrine, whether it be of God.

“The* reason,” says Swedenborg, “ why they who are of the Church at this day, know so little of Regeneration, is because they speak so much concerning the remission of sins, and concerning justification, and because they believe that sins are remitted in a moment ; and some, that they are wiped away as filth is from the body by water, and that man is justified by faith alone, or by the confidence of one moment. The reason why men of the Church believe these things is, because they do not know what sin or evil is ; for had they known this, they would know that sins cannot by any means be wiped away from any one, but that they are separated or cast aside to prevent their rising

* *Arcana Cœlestia*, art. 5398.

up when man is kept in good by the Lord; also that this cannot be effected unless evil be continually cast out, and this by means which are in number indefinite, and for the most part ineffable. In the other life those who have carried along with them the foregoing opinion—that man is justified in an instant by faith, and is washed altogether clean from sins—when they apperceive that Regeneration is effected by means indefinite in number and ineffable, are amazed, and laugh at the ignorance in which they lived in the world, which they even call insanity, concerning the instantaneous remission of sins and concerning justification. They are occasionally informed, that the Lord remitteth sins to every one who from his heart desires it; nevertheless, they to whom sins are thus remitted are not on that account separated from the diabolical crew, to which they are close tied by the evils which follow the whole life which they carry along with them. They learn afterwards, from experience, that to be separated from sins is to be separated from the Hells, and that this separation from the Hells cannot in any wise be effected except by a thousand and a thousand means known to the Lord alone; and this, if you are willing to believe it, by a continual succession to all eternity. For man is so great evil that he cannot be fully delivered even from one sin to all eternity; but he can only, by the mercy of the Lord, if he hath received it, be withheld from sin, and kept in good. How, therefore, man receives new life and is regenerated, is an *arcanum* in the Sanctuary of the Word, that is, in its internal sense," etc.

So much, then, for the *Coming in the clouds* of the Word, in regard to the doctrine of Regeneration. But what as to *prophecy*?

The worthy Vicar advances a statement against the

New Church which really implies the fulfilment of the very conditions which Prophecy marks out as those of the Church in the wilderness. "It is not probable," says he, "that this sect will be of long endurance."—"With the influence of their gifted and extraordinary founder decaying, as years roll on, it is most likely that his name will die out," which seems to be like an unintentional paraphrase on the words of the Psalmist, "When shall he die, and his name perish?" We have already observed, however, that what is to "decay" and "die out," is the Old Dispensation, and not the New. In the meantime, the Church of the New Dispensation is but the Church in the wilderness, and as such consists, at first, only of a *few*. The reason is, says Swedenborg repeatedly, because "in* the end of the Church there are but *few* who are in truths from good, and therefore it is that the Church abiding with *few* is signified by the woman flying into the wilderness."

A similar objection occurs in the *Church Quarterly Review*,† where it is said, that the Swedenborgians do not amount to more than ten thousand, and this, after a century, is a proof of *utter failure*. That it is a proof of the prevalent hostility to the New Church there can be no doubt; but still this very hostility is no other than what was predicted to befall the Church in the wilderness, and as such it is rather a testimony in its behalf than otherwise. The present revival in the Church of England is founded upon a retention of the old Catholic doctrines: in the New Church all these have to be reconsidered, and either modified or rejected; so that the revival, which takes the form of a New Church, is of a far more profound character than the revival which is content with the

* See *Apocalypse Explained*, art. 730, 732.

† For January, 1878.

continuance of the old teaching. It is this rejection of error which is the main cause of the slowness of progress urged by our opponents; but this is no other than what was predicted in the Apocalypse. Hence, on Rev. xii. 5, 6, Swedenborg observes, in the *Apocalypse Revealed* :—

“It is of the Lord’s Divine Providence that the Church should at first be confined to a *few*, and that its numbers should increase successively, because the falses of the former Church must first be removed; for before this truths cannot be received, since truths which are received and implanted before falses are removed do not remain, and are also ejected by the Dragonists. The like happened to the Christian Church, which increased from few to many. Another reason is, that a new heaven has first to be formed which will act as one with the Church on earth; therefore we read that St. John saw a new heaven, and ‘the Holy Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God.’ It is certain that a New Church, which is the New Jerusalem, will exist, because it is foretold in the *Apocalypse* (xxi. 22), and it is also certain that the falses of the former Church are first to be removed, because they are what the Apocalypse treats of as far as chapter xx.”

But now let us pass on, and consider the relation of Prophecy to some expressions in the Creeds.

As understood of the General Judgment, the cry was raised at midnight, “Behold the Bridegroom is coming;” but the Creeds say, not *is coming* but *shall come*, therefore was it not a false alarm? Swedenborg resolves the article in the Creeds into a *Coming*, the Catholic Church resolves the *Coming* into a Creed. There never can be a Second Advent upon the principles advocated by the Catholic Church, according to the Editor. It will always be a

Creed, never a *Coming*; always future, never present; always prophecy, never history; a prophecy in marble; unchangeable, while all around is changing; predicting what is to come, when it has come long ago; venerably old, when all things are new; pointing to the future of the Church, when the time of the Church is no longer.

Such is the result of the interpretation of prophecy according to the Creeds and Traditions of the past. And now, in CONCLUSION, what said the angels concerning the Second Coming?

“*Ye men of Galilee!* why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven.”* Not without deep significance were these eleven reminded that they were *men of Galilee*: not men chosen out of the Church of that day; not Scribes or Lawyers, Pharisees or Sadducees, Priests, Levites, or Rabbis; but *men of Galilee*, on the remotest borders and circumferences of the Church, touching upon the Gentiles, or, as the Churchmen of that day would say, bordering upon heathenism, and all but out of the Church; whose minds were free from the traditions, teaching, and violent prepossessions of the Church of that day; that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying—“*Galilee of the Gentiles, the people which sat in darkness saw great light.*”† And if it were not the Church of that day which saw the Lord ascend, what if in like manner it should not be the Church of this day which should see Him come again? And if the Lord did not ascend conspicuously to all the Church in that day, but only to witnesses chosen before of God,‡ what if He should come again in like manner in the present day? And if it were

* Acts i. 11.

† Matt. iv. 15, 16.

‡ Acts x. 41.

from *men of Galilee* that he was taken up in that day, what if in like manner it is to *men of Galilee* He should come down in this day? And if these *men of Galilee* represented not the recognized Church of that day, but a New Church; what if in this matter Catholics should find themselves mistaken when they are ever appealing to the "Church," "the Catholic Church," the "Catholic teaching of the Church," "the interpretation of the Catholic Church," or the authoritative voice of "the Church interpreting God's Word from the beginning?" The Jews of old rested in the antiquity of their Church, the heathens in that of their religions, and NOVELTY was one of the foremost charges brought against Christianity; and what was the answer? The following of St. Ambrose to Symmachus:* "Our way of Religion you say is new, and yours ancient; and what does this either hurt our cause or help yours? If ours be new, 'twill in time become old. Is yours old? There was a time when it was new. The goodness and authority of religion is not to be valued by length of time, but by the excellency of its worship; nor does it become us to consider so much when it begun, as what it is we worship."

* Cave's *Primitive Christianity*, part i., chap. ii.

POSTSCRIPT.

A TRACT has reached us (A.D. 1858), entitled *The Silence of Scripture*; being one of the Lectures to the "Young Men's Christian Association," by J. C. Miller, D.D., Honorary Canon of Worcester, Rector of St. Martin's, Birmingham, etc. The object of the lecture is to shew that the *Silence of Scripture* is inspired, and is one of the proofs that it is a Book of God, the writings of enthusiasts and impostors being very diffuse upon those subjects on which Scripture says nothing. In the way of illustration the Lecturer quotes the case of Swedenborg, as stated by Archbishop Whately in his *Essays on some of the Peculiarities of the Christian Religion*; affirming with him, "that though his followers insist much upon the importance of believing in this pretended revelation, it would, I believe, be difficult for them to state even any one point in which a man is called upon to alter either his *conduct*, his *motives*, or his *moral sentiments*, in consequence of such belief." The Vicar of Frome, on the contrary, maintains,* that as to the Atonement, Swedenborg teaches so grievous a heresy that "if we tolerate it for an instant, we drop immediately into the worst tenets either of Pelagianism or of Socinianism;" and † that he "has fallen into heresies of a *most dangerous character*, more especially on the Holy Trinity and a future world." How can we reconcile these opposite statements?

The Vicar of Frome argues against Swedenborg's writings on the ground that *perfect light* was proper to the First Advent, and that a state of darkness is proper

* Page 345.

† Page 5.

to the Church at the Second Advent. The Rector of St. Martin's argues against them on the ground that the Church is now, indeed, in darkness, but that "*this darkness even is a revelation*;"* hence he too nowhere anticipates any increase of spiritual light, or seems to express the least desire for it; on the contrary, he advocates, with Vinet, the "repose of reason," and expatiates upon the beauty and loveliness of *night*, because, among other advantages, it enables men to spread over their sorrows "*with the opiate of sleep, the thick veil of oblivion*;" and he proceeds to ask the Young Men's Christian Association, "*Why do you not, for a similar reason, love the night of Divine Mysteries?*" This is not, we imagine, a very awakening Theology; and we should scarcely have thought that either the Church, or the Age, or the Association, stood in need of soporifics of this kind. If, however, as some have said, the Church has for a long time been fast asleep, we know the theology which has been the cause of it. Perhaps, when Dr. Miller is enabled to interpret the expression, *coming in clouds*, he may find that Scripture is not quite so *silent* as he imagines; that the *clouds* are not the *revelation*, but the vehicle of the revelation; not the *coming*, but the vehicle of the coming; and when the *coming* takes place, what will those have to say who had mistaken the *clouds* for all that was to come!

Of course, a lamp without oil will give no light; and if a person concludes, in such a case, that, therefore, it was not made with a view to give any, especially as so many *ignes fatui* and meteoric phenomena were abroad, that it was safer thus to regard the very darkness as a revelation; we can only say, that to us it seems to be

that kind of reasoning which might well become the five foolish virgins. The Roman Catholic may say that the Apocalypse is *silent* upon the Church of Rome; the Protestant may affirm that Babylon means Rome. The Protestant may say that the Apocalypse is *silent* in regard to the Reformed Church; the Roman Catholic, that it is signified by one of the beasts in the Revelation. Archbishop Whately may affirm that Scripture is *silent*, or nearly so, with respect to Heaven and the Angels; some of the Fathers may affirm that the Temple means the heavens, its three divisions the three heavens, and the furniture in each division, spiritually interpreted, the wisdom of the Angels. In all these cases one says Scripture is *silent*, another that it is not. Both Roman Catholic and Protestant, again, may say that the Old Testament is *silent* on the doctrine of Regeneration and the glorification of the Lord's Humanity; Swedenborg says that it treats, in the spiritual sense, of nothing else. We agree with Dr. Miller, that the greater part of Scripture is *silent*, but only until it has found an interpreter; and that in this sense the Scripture has been ominously silent and dark for many ages, we readily grant; but we cannot, therefore, accept the position, that "*the very darkness is a revelation,*" as a good excuse for a total failure in interpretation. Before, therefore, we come to Dr. Miller's conclusion, it must first be determined that the principle of interpretation has been the right one; and that it has *not* been so, is clearly intimated by our new acquaintance, *The Literary Churchman*, who, in the number for January 1, 1858, art. *Rationalism*, thus concedes the whole principle for which Swedenborg contends, and quietly hints the downfall of the prevailing literal system of interpretation:—

“The most ancient Fathers of the Church resorted to Holy Scripture less for its literal than its spiritual import ; nor will it be surprising if, as the ages pass on, it be found that that *primitive law of purely spiritual interpretation exhibited the Divinest Wisdom*. Men of the letter have often scoffed at the symbolical meanings discovered in the Sacred Word ; perhaps ‘ the letter ’ yet may be obliged to yield its too much vaunted prominence ; and the children of faith and holiness may discover that God’s spirit may *shine through* the Word ‘ as a lamp to their path,’ when the *outward vehicle* seems *dark* to the natural eye. It yet may be seen, we say, that St. Barnabas, St. Clement, and Origen, were the precursors of a higher school than St. Jerome.”

FINIS.

ERRATA.

p. 11, note, for “Boyle’s *Lectures*,” read “Boyle *Lectures*.”

p. 68, third line from bottom, for “padron,” read “pardon.”



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