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PART I.

THE
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OF
SWEDENBORG:
OR
MEMORABLE RELATIONS
OF
THINGS SEEN AND HEARD
IN
HEAVEN AND HELL.

WITH AN INTRODUCTION
BY GEORGE BUSH.

NEW YORK:
JOHN ALLEN, 139 NASSAU STREET
BOSTON: OTIS CLAPP, 12 SCHOOL STREET.

1846.

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STATEMENT OF REASONS

FOR EMBRACING

THE DOCTRINES AND DISCLOSURES

OF

EMANUEL SWEDENBORG.

"The inquiry of Truth, which is the love-making or wooing of it; the knowledge of Truth which is the presence of it; and the belief of Truth, which is the enjoying of it; is the Sovereign Good of human nature." *Bacon.*

By GEORGE BUSH.

NEW-YORK:

JOHN ALLEN, 139 NASSAU STREET.

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1846.

“There are five classes of those who read my writings. The first reject them entirely, because they are in another persuasion, or because they are in no faith. The second receive them as scientifics, or as objects of mere curiosity. The third receive them intellectually, and are in some measure pleased with them, but whenever they require an application to regulate their lives, they remain where they were before. The fourth receive them in a persuasive manner, and are thereby led, in a certain degree, to amend their lives and perform uses. The fifth receive them with delight, and confirm them in their lives.”—*Hobart's Life of Swedenborg*, p. 6.

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Request of
Mrs. James Huntley Campbell
2-16-1932

STATEMENT OF REASONS, &c.

The general law which governs the propagation of truth is doubtless of universal bearing and authority. Every man is bound, by his allegiance to truth, to do what in him lies, consistently with his various relations in life, to extend and confirm its empire among men. Nor can it be doubted that the pressure of this obligation is always in proportion to his sense of the intrinsic weight and importance of the truth which he holds. At the same time he is unquestionably to be governed by a wise discretion as to the time, place, and circumstances in which he shall witness his good confession. The line of policy, aiming at this end, which might be expedient, all things considered, for one might not be expedient for another occupying a different position, and sustaining different relations. There may often be reasons operating with an individual to produce a change in his views of moral and religious truth, while yet there may not be a call upon him for an open and public avowal of those reasons. It is easy to conceive that in many cases the most effectual declaration of sentiment is made by the silent but expressive language of life—a life prompted and ruled by the convictions which may have established themselves in the mind. The case however, is palpably altered when one has previously sustained a more public relation—when he has become somewhat known as the advocate of a different and opposite class of opinions—when he has occupied, in a sphere however humble, the post of a public teacher—when he has written books that have obtained a circulation more or less extensive, and which embody sentiments that have been modified by subsequent inquiries. In a case of this kind it can scarcely be deemed an impeachment of the decorous and modest estimate which every man is reasonably expected to entertain of his own influence or standing in the community, if he presumes to satisfy the natural curiosity to become acquainted with the reasons which have led to a decided change in his views on important subjects, especially on the subject of his religious belief. The fact of such an avowed change is a virtual appeal to those who are still resting in his former opinions to institute an inquiry into their grounds, as the reasons which have weighed with him, if sound, are entitled to weigh with them also; and it may safely be presumed that a portion at least of his former readers and approvers will be willing to bestow a candid consideration upon the arguments he has to proffer in behalf of his course.

I venture, therefore, to avail myself of the above considerations by way of

apology, for presenting, through the present medium, somewhat of a formal and detailed exposition of the grounds on which I have been induced, after long, diligent, and serious investigation, to profess an unhesitating adoption of the system of religious doctrine and spiritual disclosure propounded to the world by Emanuel Swedenborg. I am the more induced to this from the fact that I have been frequently solicited from different quarters, and by those who were pleased to express a deep anticipative interest in such an expose, to make the statement that I now propose. As the request is reasonable, I have determined to comply with it. It is a measure due perhaps to myself and to those who have hitherto cherished towards me a kindly personal regard, and who have been conscious of a more or less lively sympathy with the general views advanced in my different publications. From the narrow limits within which it is necessarily compressed the sketch must inevitably be imperfect, and in some cases perhaps scarcely just to particular points of doctrine or disclosure touched upon. But I may still hope to succeed in exhibiting, however briefly, a fair outline of the mental process which has resulted in my present convictions. Of the intrinsic sufficiency of the reasons cited, the reader will of course form his own judgment. In yielding my credence to Emanuel Swedenborg as a truly commissioned messenger from God to man I claim to have been governed by evidence that not only has been satisfactory to myself, but by evidence that *ought* to satisfy me—evidence too that will not fail to satisfy every truly candid and reflecting inquirer who will be at the pains of spreading it before him. But as I cannot transfer to another mind the influence of this evidence upon my own, so neither can I expect the above declaration to be viewed otherwise than as a simple expression of opinion, which may be true or not in any particular case. One thing however is certain—it is impossible for a fair verdict to be passed upon the issue of my examination by any one who has not himself gone over the ground which it covers and thus put himself in possession of the requisite data for forming a judgment. A conclusion cannot be pronounced false or fallacious but upon a full knowledge of all the just grounds upon which it is affirmed to be sound and true.

In the prosecution of my purpose an alternative course presents itself. I might either proceed to exhibit a compend of the reasons which have weighed with me, in my change of sentiment, in the form in which they now stand before my mind, arranged in systematic order, and as in my judgment best calculated to produce effect upon an inquiring spirit, independent of the process through which my own mind passed in reaching its conclusions—or I may follow more strictly the course of experience, from the first dawn of interest in Swedenborg's writings through the various alternations of doubt and assent, up to the point at which doubt disappeared and assent became firm and triumphant. The latter method is doubtless preferable, notwithstanding the unavoidable air of *egoism* which it involves, as most persons may be presumed to feel a deeper interest in what they might perhaps be disposed to term the *natural history of a conversion*, even if they should regard it as a sample of the "Natural History of Enthusiasm." Whether the present be a case of this kind, they will be better qualified to judge when the record is spread before them.

In the retrospect of the last five or six years of my moral and intellectual life, I am compelled to fix upon the date when I was first led to question the received

doctrine of the Resurrection as the point from which my progress really began to tend towards the New Church, although then profoundly ignorant of the fact. I had previously acquired no precise knowledge of Swedenborg's system, nor formed any intelligent estimate of his character. With the mass of the Christian world I had contented myself with the vague impression of his having been a man of respectable talents and attainments, but who had unhappily fallen into a kind of monomania, which made him the victim of strange delusions and dreams—the honest but real dupe of the wildest phantasies in respect to the state of man after death, and the constituent nature of Heaven and Hell. As to anything like a consistent or rational philosophy of man's nature or the constitution of the universe, I should as soon have looked for it in the Koran of Mahomet or the Vedas of the Hindoos, or what I then deemed the senseless ravings of Jacob Behmen. Having never read his works, but in fragmentary extracts, I was unprepared to recognize in him anything beyond the character of a well meaning mystic, who had given forth to the world a strange medley of hallucinations that could never be supposed to meet with acceptance except in minds which had received some touch of a similar mania, and which had lost, if they ever possessed, the power of accurately discriminating between visions and verities. Such was my general estimate of the man up to the time when I had become settled in the belief that the current dogma of the *resurrection of the material body* was a gratuitous hypothesis equally unsupported by a sound interpretation of Scripture, or by the fair inductions of reason.

I had already begun to announce my conclusions on this head in a course of public Lectures delivered in this city and elsewhere, maintaining that the true resurrection took place at death, when at the close of one of these Lectures, in an eastern city, a lady incidentally remarked to me that the views I had advanced bore a striking analogy with those of Swedenborg on the same theme, and intimating her impression that I must have been conversant with his works. The supposition was unfounded, but my curiosity was excited, and I determined, at the first favorable opportunity, to acquaint myself with the system and thus supply a conscious desideratum in my knowledge.

Not many months elapsed before a copy of Noble's Appeal in behalf of the views of the New Church fell into my hands, by the perusal of which I was very deeply impressed. I was compelled to form an entirely new estimate of the man and of the system. I not only saw my own general views of the nature of the resurrection abundantly confirmed and illustrated, and planted upon the basis of a philosophy and psychology, which I still deem impregnable, but an exhibition also of the doctrine of the Lord's Second Advent which came home to my convictions with a peculiar power of demonstration. I was struck too in the perusal of this work, with the *Scriptural* character of the evidence adduced in support of the doctrines. I had previously no adequate conception of the amount of testimony from this source going to sustain the leading positions of the New Church scheme, and to this hour I do not scruple to regard Noble's Appeal as an unanswerable defence of the system.

Hitherto, however, I had read nothing of Swedenborg's own writings, excepting occasional detached paragraphs. The "Heaven and Hell" shortly afterwards fell under my perusal. I read it with profound interest, but still with great abatement from a full conviction of its truth. I was rather disposed, on the whole,

to admit the possibility of the psychological state into which Swedenborg declared himself to be brought, and which alone could make him cognizant of the realities of the spirit-world, because I saw that a similar immission into that world had been granted to the prophets and apostles, which showed that such a state could exist, and if it had once existed, I saw not why it might not again, provided sufficient reasons could be pleaded for it; and the reasons alleged I felt to be sufficient, if they were but sound; and this was a question that I was willing to consider, which I think the mass of the Christian world is not. But I found, notwithstanding, such a violence done to all my preconceptions of that world, that I doubted exceedingly the absolute reliableness of his statements. I could not help distrusting the clearness of his perceptions. I was continually haunted by the suspicion that his preformed ideas on the subject had both shaped and colored his visions. This was more especially the case in regard to his descriptions of celestial and infernal scenery. I had the greatest difficulty imaginable in conceiving the possibility that any objects similar to those with which we are conversant here should even *appear* to exist there. Again and again did I propose to myself the question, What kind of an entity is a spiritual house, animal, or bird—a spiritual mountain, garden, grove, or tree—a spiritual cavern, lake, or stream—not dreaming that these things there exist by the very laws of the human mind, as outbirths or emanations of the interior spirit, and as living representatives of its affections and thoughts. It did not then occur to me that a spirit dislodged from the body must, from the necessity of the case, be introduced into the midst of *spiritual* realities, and that these cannot in the nature of things be any other than what Swedenborg describes them to be—that is, they must be what we should term *mental creations or projections*. A little deeper reflection would have then taught me, as it has since done, the truth of Swedenborg's statement, that thoughts are *substances*, and that to spirits that alone can be *substantial* which is *spiritual*, and consequently that alone can be *real*.* We indeed, in common parlance, reverse these terms, and denominate that *substantial* which is *material*, and which comes under the cognizance of the external senses. But the spirit, on leaving the body, leaves the region of dead matter, and comes into a sphere where itself and its emanations are the *real substances* or the *substantial realities*. Consequently what is here *subjective* becomes there *objective*. One spirit's thoughts and ideas become to another spirit just as much a *bona fide* objective reality as the spirit himself, for how can we separate them?

* "It is to be observed, that knowledges and truths are things no more abstracted from the very pure substances appertaining to the interior of man or his spirit, than vision is abstracted from its organ the eye, or than hearing is abstracted from its organ the ear. There are purer substances, and those real, from which knowledges and thoughts exist, whose variations of form being animated and modified by an influx of life from the Lord, present them to the mind, whilst their agreements and harmonies, in succession or simultaneously, affect the mind, and constitute what is called beautiful, pleasant, and delightful. Spirits themselves are forms, that is, consist of continuous forms, equally as men, but of a purer nature, and not visible to the bodily sight. And whereas these forms or substances are not to be seen by the corporeal eye, man at this day conceives no otherwise than that knowledges and thoughts are abstract things; hence also comes the folly of mankind in the present age, in that they do not believe that they have a spirit within them which is to live after the death of the body, when yet this spirit is a substance much more real than the material substance of its body: yea, if you will believe it, the spirit, after being freed from corporeal, is that very purified body, which many say they are to have at the day of judgment, when they believe that they shall first rise again."—A. C. 3276.

Is not a spirit spiritual, and is not his thought, like himself, spiritual also? If so, does not the one come to the cognition of a fellow-spirit by the same means as the other? In the present world we can only perceive each other's spirits through the intervening medium of the body, except as it is manifested through written expression. But in that world the body is laid aside, and the cognizance of the interior being is comparatively immediate and direct. Why then shall we not perceive the thoughts as well as the subject from which they flow?

The case may be illustrated from the phenomena of dreaming. In this state the body with its sensations is dormant, yet the mind, which is really the man himself, who is an embodied spirit, beholds a world of objects which are to him, for the time being, *real*. Yet the things seen are of the same nature with the being who sees them; they are an emanation from himself; and we have only to suppose two persons in this state to behold the objects of each other's dreams, to gain a very tolerable conception of the true rationale of the visual scenery of the other life. In regard to their own dreams they see respectively only what is an outbirth from their own interior essence, and yet to their consciousness it is as if they saw with an eye objective realities as truly *without* them as are any of the objects of vision in the material world. So a man's image in a mirror or on a thick mass of fog, is at once extraneous to himself, and yet *from* himself; it can have no existence apart from himself, although it can be seen by another as well as by himself. If now we go a little farther in our illustrative fancy, and imagine a person to be suddenly translated in a dreaming state into the spiritual world, we approximate still nearer an adequate view of the subject. For what is it that makes the transition but the very part of the man that dreams? The body is left behind, and the spirit goes forth, and a spiritual essence should of course go into a spiritual world. What does it there meet with but beings like itself?—what does it there see but the things which are appropriate to spirit?—and what are these, ontologically considered, but the things with which it was conversant a moment before in its dream? I do not of course say, that the visible aspect and character of the objects seen are in the two states the same, for in the other world the external scenery is always a reflection of the internal states of those from whom it emanates. But my position is, that the *mode of vision*, and the *nature of the substances* with which it deals, are essentially the same. The spirit must necessarily find itself surrounded with scenery there analogous to what it sees here, *because it carries it with it*. Why not? It was in the midst of objects appropriate to its nature while the body was dormant, and why should it find itself in a desert or a blank vacuity upon leaving the body? Will it not be embosomed in the midst of *forms* and *substances* as real as itself? Let no one be stumbled by this use of the word *substance*. There are spiritual substances as well as material, nor have we the least hesitation in applying the word to “the stuff that dreams are made of.” In like manner, the mental creations of spirits projected forth to the view of other spirits are to them as real, as veritable, as palpable, as a granite pillar is to us in our corporeal condition.

This I am aware will find with many but a slow admission on its first announcement, from their having been always accustomed to regard these manifestations of mind as simple *acts, exercises, operations, &c.* But let the matter be pondered, and judgment rendered, whether the fact be not actually so. How can anything exist which is not a *substance*? And how can anything that exists

act but by the putting forth of its qualities and functions *as a substance*? The sun *acts* by the emission of its light and heat. Are not the light and heat of the sun a part of its *substance*? A flower *acts* by sending forth a sphere of fragrance. Is not the fragrance as real a *substance* as the flower, though vastly more rarified and etherial? So of the human spirit. A man's thoughts and mental images are the goings forth of the *substance* of his being; they are as substantial *as* his being; and if a spirit himself can be an objective reality to another spirit, his intellectual conceptions, for the same reason, must be equally objective. Consequently nothing more is needed for one's being introduced into the most splendid celestial scenery than to find himself surrounded by the mental creations prompted by the pure and angelic affections of the countless multitudes which constitute that kingdom. These *must* be beautiful, because they originate in a moral state of the inner man which can only be represented by objects of a corresponding character; and that they are *real*, arises from the nature and necessity of the case. Spiritual objects must be the *real* objects to a spirit. The infernal scenery, though a counterpart to this, depends upon the same law.*

A great advance was accordingly made towards a full reception of the disclosures of Swedenborg, when the objections on this score were overcome. I saw that here was a rational and philosophical theory of the dominant conditions of the other life, and yet it was evidently a revelation of such a nature as to transcend the utmost grasp of the unassisted human faculties. The inference therefore was not only fair, but irresistible, that Swedenborg was brought into a preternatural state in order to his being enabled to make it, and the admission of this was a virtual admission of the main item of his claim—the claim of having been divinely empowered to lay open the verities of man's future existence, and the essential nature of Heaven and Hell.

This primary fact then having been established to my own satisfaction, I was of course very strongly disposed to listen with the deepest respect to whatever other reports he brought from that world of mystery and of marvel, although I was still very far, as indeed I hope ever to be, from a blind surrender of my own judgment as to every point of his announcements. I was not yet prepared to receive the distinctive features of his theological doctrines, and especially was I stumbled by his unsparing critiques upon the doctrine of Justification by Faith alone, which I had been taught to regard as the grand tenet established by the Reformation, and which I supposed to be true of course, simply from its having been the result of that struggle, which is so often spoken of as the *glorious* Reformation from the errors of Popery. I had yet to learn that there were a great many things in the Reformation that need much further *reforming*. So also in regard to the peculiar views advanced respecting the true nature of the Atonement, from which the current doctrine of Justification is inseparable. It was

* "The representations which exist in another life are appearances, but living ones, because they are from the light of life; the light of life is the divine wisdom, which is from the Lord alone; hence all things which exist from that light are real, not like those things which exist from the light of the world; wherefore they who are in another life have occasionally said, that the things they see there are real things, and the things which man sees are respectively not real, because the former things live, and thus immediately affect their life, whereas the latter things do not live, thus neither do they affect the life, unless so far, and in such a manner, as the things which are of this world's light with them, conjoin themselves adequately and correspondently with the things which are of the light of heaven."—A. C. 3485.

long before I could so entirely emancipate my mind from traditional sentiments as to embrace fully what I now regard as the far more scriptural views of the New Church on that subject, to wit, that the atonement was what is signified by the word—*reconciliation*—God reconciling the world to himself, instead of reconciling himself to the world. But the great rock of offence with me was the interior or spiritual sense of the Word. This, I was strongly assured, even if there were to some extent a basis of truth on which it rested, was yet carried to an entirely fanciful extreme in Swedenborg's interpretations, and I had scarcely a doubt that if I ever fully accepted the system as a whole, it would still be with a reservation on this score. One who is at all acquainted with the general scheme, will see at once from this, that I had thus far failed to apprehend the true genius of the Science of Correspondences, on which it rests, and from which it flows by inevitable sequence. The truth of this science, however, gradually loomed up more and more to view, as I became more clearly aware of the spiritual nature of man, and of the fundamental fact, that all natural things are pervaded, acted, moulded, vivified by the influx of spiritual causes.

And here I am constrained, by fealty to truth, to acknowledge, that the circumstance of my being brought, about this time, into contact with the phenomena of Mesmerism, had a most decided bearing upon the progress of my convictions, nor do I scruple to say that in all human probability I should never have come to the position which I now occupy, had it not been for the overwhelming evidence of truth derived from this source. It was not simply the fact that persons thrown into the Mesmeric trance invariably made the same report, as far as their perceptions extended, that Swedenborg does in regard to the laws and realities of the spiritual sphere, however ignorant beforehand of his disclosures; but the state itself, with its most obvious manifestations, was such as to afford a demonstration to the very senses of the truth of his general assertions in respect to the principles and mode of spiritual existence in the other life. When I saw my own volitions controlling the muscular movements of another organization—when I saw the train of my own unuttered thoughts distinctly followed and read out to me—when I beheld even my own bodily sensations sympathetically transferred to another person—I could no longer doubt that a system was true which affirmed, in regard to the spiritual being, the principles that lay at the foundation of these phenomena, and which fully and satisfactorily explained them. The laws which Swedenborg lays down in regard to mental intercourse between spirits, are precisely the laws which are developed in the Mesmeric manifestations, so that I hesitate not in the least to affirm, that if the latter be true, the former must be.

I am of course aware of the light in which this subject is viewed by the mass of intelligent men. I am not ignorant that they reject the whole matter as a vile medley of imposture and delusion, and that they will at once pronounce all asserted experience in the premises as phantasy and fallacy. Such persons are welcome to their opinion. I *know* that I have not been deceived as to the facts averred. I *know* that the conceptions of my own mind have been reproduced in another mind without any outward signs, simply as the result of my coming into a peculiar communication with the mesmerized subject. I *know* too that this is the very result which one is taught to expect from what Swedenborg has

revealed of the laws of man's spiritual economy, as disclosed to him that they might be made known to the world.

I make the foregoing statement with the full belief, at the same time, that there are often delusions and deceptions, and often perhaps abuses, connected with the exhibitions of this remarkable power. But the question is not in regard to the uses made of it, but in regard to the truth involved in it. On this, head alone do I now speak, and I do not hesitate to speak the language, not simply of belief, but of assurance. If I know a single fact in any science—in Geology, Chemistry, Optics, or Acoustics—I know the truth of the leading phenomena of Mesmerism, and I utter it too as my unwavering judgment that this class of facts is doing more at this moment, under the counsels of divine providence, to beget in thinking minds a conviction of the well-founded character of Swedenborg's claims than any other mere human agency. I am, at the same time, well apprised of the prejudice which exists against these developments as viewed in connexion with the doctrines and disclosures of Swedenborg. I know it is thought to be a perilous compromising these doctrines to have them named in any kind of relation to what is deemed by multitudes the charlatanism of mountebanks and visionaries or the *diablerie* of infernal powers. But so long as I clearly perceive in them the showings forth of a grand psychological law of our being, implanted by the Creator himself, I cannot think or speak disparagingly of them without a bold and daring arraignment of the constitution which he has given to his creatures. "Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, why hast thou made me thus?" Methinks the friends and adherents of the New Church, though not entering into it *practically*, ought to be truly thankful that they are enabled to appeal to such a convincing testimony of the truth of certain tenets of their creed on which it is usually so difficult to produce conviction with the mass of men. An immense advance is gained for truth when once the conviction takes deep root *that there is a spiritual world*, and that it is continually acting upon the natural world. The fact is no doubt vaguely admitted by the great body of Christians, but how practical becomes the assurance when we behold the influence of one spirit upon another, notwithstanding the interposing veil of the flesh! If such effects are witnessed as flowing from spirits in the body, what stupendous agency must be exerted upon us by spirits out of the body!

But to return to my narrative. The progress of my inquiry soon brought me acquainted with another feature of Swedenborg's system which took me altogether by surprise, as nothing of the kind was in the least anticipated. I allude to the *philosophy* which it involves. I had not the least conception that I was to find in it a profound scientific exposition of all the grand problems of the physical universe. I had begun to see indeed that it proffered the most satisfactory theory of the spiritual world,—that it lifted the curtain which ordinarily hides the sublime future from our view—but it was only by degrees, that I perceived that it swept the whole range of being and aimed at nothing less than to bring into entire harmony the Works and the Word of God—to wed Reason and Revelation—to establish the unity of true Philosophy with true Faith. A deep impression on this score was received from the small treatise entitled the "Athanasian Creed," and this was vastly confirmed by the larger work, "The Divine Love and Wisdom," which certainly contains more true science in respect to

the constitution of the universe than all the learned tomes of all the libraries of Christendom. From this work I learned the grand doctrine of *Life*—that there is no such thing as created life either in angels, men, animals, or plants—that on the contrary all life is continual influx from the Deity, the only fountain of being. This I saw needed only to be perceived by physiologists to rectify all their conclusions in respect to the *vital principle*, as if it might be detected in the midst of the structures which it animates. There is no vital principle that lives in any corporeal form in any other sense than that in which the heat of the sun lives in the opening flower in the garden. Is there any heat in a plant except what comes from the sun, and yet can a plant live without the heat? As the structure of the plant is the created receptacle for the inflowing and animating heat, so man's form is a created receptacle for the influent life proceeding from the infinite and uncreated source of all life.*

Yet no one will be apt, or able in fact, to receive any satisfaction from the work above-mentioned, unless he is willing to admit that the physical universe has had a spiritual origin. He must be able to conceive the possibility that what he might term the abstract principles of Love and Wisdom in the Divine Being shall evolve themselves into ultimates or material embodiments—consequently that creation has by no means proceeded upon the ground of naked omnipotence, as is usually understood, or in other words, has resulted from a simple *fiat* of the Almighty, speaking entity out of non-entity, but by *emanation* from the very central source of existence. God has created the universe, not out of nothing, but out of himself.†

* “Man is an organ of life, and God alone is life; and God infuses his life into the organ and every part of it, as the sun infuses its heat into a tree and every part of it; and God gives to man to feel that life in himself as his own, and God wills that man should feel so, in order that he may live as of himself, according to the laws of order, which are as many as there are precepts in the Word, and dispose himself for receiving the love of God. But still God continually holds, with his finger, the perpendicular over the balance, and moderates, but never violates, free agency by forcing. A tree cannot receive anything, which the heat of the sun introduces through the root, unless it acquire warmth and heat as to each one of its fibres; nor can the elements rise up through the root, unless each of its fibres, from the heat received, also give out heat, and thus contribute to the passage. So also does man from the heat of life received from God. But he, differently from a tree, feels that as his own, although it is not his; but as far as he believes that it is his, and not God's, so far he receives the light of life, but not the heat of love from God, but the heat of love from hell; which, because it is gross, stops and closes up the purer little branches of the organ, as the impure blood does the capillary vessels of the body; thus man makes himself from spiritual merely natural.”—*T. C. R.* 504.

† “It is known that all and everything in the universe was created from God; hence the universe with all and everything in it, in the Word, is called the work of the hands of Jehovah. It is commonly said, that the world in its complex was created out of nothing, of which nothing an idea is entertained as of absolute nothing; but out of absolute nothing, nothing is made, or can be made. This is a manifest truth. Wherefore the universe, which is an image of God, and therefore full of God, could not be created but in God from God: for God is *Esse* itself, and that which *IS* must exist from an *Esse*: to create what does exist from nothing, which does not exist, is an absolute contradiction.”—*D. L. & W.*

“Every one who thinks from clear reason, sees that the universe was not created out of nothing, since he sees that anything cannot be made out of nothing; for nothing is nothing, and to make anything out of nothing is contradictory; and what is contradictory, is contrary to the light of truth, which is from the divine wisdom; and whatever is not from divine wisdom, is not from the divine omnipotence. Every one who thinks from clear reason, also sees that all things were created out of a substance, which is substance in itself, for this is Being itself, from which all things, that are, can exist; and because God alone is substance in itself, and thence Being itself, it is evident that

The mind, however, in pursuing this idea, is not to conceive of matter as having been first created in its grosser or solid forms. All the solid substances are resolvable back into gases, and of what further refinements these are capable—to what degree they may be attenuated and etherealized, or, so to speak, spiritualized—it is impossible to define. But it is not very difficult to conceive the truth of Swedenborg's doctrine on this subject—that the creation of the material universe has been effected by the gradual solidification of atmospheres emanating in the first instance from the Deity considered as a spiritual sun, and in the second from the natural sun, and which become more gross and dense the farther they recede from the centre.* The expansion of this theory in its details

the existence of things is not from elsewhere. This many have seen, because reason gives to see it; but they durst not confirm it, fearing that thus they might perhaps come into the thought, that the created universe is God, because from God, or that nature is from itself, and thus that its inmost is what is called God. Hence it is, that although many have seen, that the existence of all things is from no other source than from God and from his Being, still they have not dared to advance beyond the first thought concerning it, lest they should perplex their understanding with the Gordian knot so called, from which they might not afterwards be able to extricate it. The reason why they would not be able to extricate the understanding, is because they thought concerning God, and concerning the creation of the universe by God, from time and space, which are proper to nature; and from nature no one can perceive God and the creation of the universe; but every one whose understanding is in any interior light, can perceive nature and its creation from God, because God is not in time and space."—*Id.* 283.

"Although the Divine is in all and everything of the created universe, still there is nothing of what is Divine in itself in their Esse; for the created universe is not God but from God, and being from God, his image is in it, as the image of a man in a mirror, in which indeed the man appears, but still there is nothing of the man in it."—*Id.* 59.

* "There exists a spiritual world, which is prior, interior, and superior to the natural world; everything of the spiritual world is a cause, and everything of the natural world is an effect"—*Ap. Ez.* 1206.

"There are two suns, the sun of the spiritual world, and the sun of the natural world. The sun of the spiritual world is the divine love of the Lord—the sun of the natural world is pure fire. From the sun which is divine love commences every work of creation; and by the sun which is fire every such work is performed. All that proceeds from the sun which is divine love is called spiritual—all that proceeds from the sun which is fire is called natural. What is spiritual, from its origin hath life in itself, but what is natural, from its origin hath nothing of life in itself. And as from these two fountains of the universe all things have existed and still subsist in both worlds, it follows that there is a spiritual and natural operation in every created thing in this world; the spiritual being as a soul, and the natural as the body, the spiritual as the internal, and the natural as the external—or the spiritual as the cause, and the natural as the effect. That these two principles cannot be separated in any one thing, is well known to every wise person—for if you separate the cause from the effect, the effect perishes—or if you separate the internal from the external, the latter perishes; in like manner as when the soul is separated from the body. That there is such a conjunction in every particular thing, yea, even in the most singular things of nature, has not yet been known: this arises from the ignorance which has prevailed concerning the spiritual world, the sun there, and its heat, and its light; and also from the insinuated reasonings of sensual men in ascribing all things to nature, and rarely anything to God, except creation in general; and yet there is not the least thing existing in nature, nor can exist, in which there is not something spiritual. That this which is spiritual is in all and every particular thing of the three kingdoms of nature, and the manner of its existence therein, is further explained in the following part of this work."—*Ap. Ez.* 1198.

"That substances or matters, such as are in the earths, were produced from the sun, by its atmospheres, who doth not affirm, who thinks that there are perpetual intermediations from the first principle to the last; and that nothing can exist, but from somewhat prior to itself, and at length from the first; and the first is the sun of the spiritual world, and the first of that sun is God-man, or the Lord. Now, since the atmospheres are those prior principles by which that sun presents itself in the last principles, and since those prior principles continually decrease in activity and expansion even to the last, it follows that when their activity and expansion cease in ultimates, they become

would encroach too largely upon my allotted limits, but the perusal of the "Divine Love and Wisdom," especially in connexion with De Guay's "Letters to a Man of the World," will open to the reader a sublime chapter upon Creation, announcing views which all science is continually tending to confirm, for nothing is more obvious than that the human mind is all the while advancing to the conclusion, that the spiritual world is the region of *causes*, while the natural world is the sphere of *effects*. The point of contact between these two spheres, and the nature of their mutual relation with each other, Swedenborg alone has fully developed. His revelations differ from all previous scientific inductions on this head, as guessing differs from demonstration.

Viewing the system as a whole, it is seen to be replete with a *philosophy* which covers the whole ground of its disclosures. It gives a *rationale* not only of all the physical facts, but of all the intellectual and moral doctrines, of which it treats. It satisfies the reason, not only as to its grand asserted truths, but as to the *grounds* and *modes* of those truths. It shows a *how* and a *why* for everything. It develops the *laws* by which the most hidden operations of the spirit and the spiritual life are governed. It gives, if I may so say, the *physiology* of the mental and the moral of man's interior being. We are not, on this system, required to rest in spiritual phenomena, termed religious, as ultimate facts, capable of no rational solution, but the illuminated author lays a substratum in the principles of ontology itself for the most philosophical exposition of everything embraced under the general head of *exercises* and *acts*. The truth of this philosophy will, of course, be admitted no farther than it is understood, and it cannot be understood without study. This study, except to a very limited extent, has hitherto been withheld from the bare force of prejudice; and so it will probably continue to be for some time to come, but it will inevitably be exacted in the end. All enlightened inquiry is rapidly tending to concentrate itself to the point of the connexion between the spiritual and the natural world; and when reason, left to its own powers, has reached its ultimatum in this direction, it will find itself, to its surprise, standing before the opened door of the Temple of Truth, with the Swedish seer in waiting to conduct it into the inner sanctuary.

Having thus acquainted myself with these more outward and general characteristics of the system, and having become fully assured of its claims upon the most profound attention, I was prepared to appreciate somewhat more adequately its purely theological aspects. And here I was at once arrested by a new view of the central doctrine of God and the Trinity. Although I had long previously rested in the conclusion that the maintenance of the tripersonal distinction was not essential to the truth of Christ's supreme deityship, yet I was still conscious of laboring under an inadequate conception of the true doctrine. While, on the one hand, I was absolutely certain that there was a sense in which Jesus was truly divine, and one with Jehovah, yet, on the other, I failed to perceive precisely *how* this identity was to be apprehended, so that the admitted Trinity should be consistent with the obvious unity of the Divine nature. The

substances and matters, such as are in the earths; which retain from the atmospheres, from which they had their origin, an effort and endeavor to produce uses. They who do not establish the creation of the universe and all things therein by continual inter-mediations from the first, cannot but construct hypotheses unconnected and disjointed from their causes, which when examined by a mind which looks interiorly into things, appear not like houses, but like a heap of rubbish."—D. L. & W. 303.

evidence of Scripture seemed conclusive, that Christ was a true and perfect man; and if so I saw not how to avoid the inference, that he must have possessed a real human soul, as well as a real human body.* But inasmuch as the evidence was equally clear of his being at the same time the subject of Divine attributes, I could only solve the problem of this duality of character by supposing a mystical union of the interior Divine and human nature, in virtue of which he was denominated God as well as man; nor was it till I became acquainted with Swedenborg's expose of the subject that I perceived that this view was in fact subversive of the true and essential divinity of Christ. For if he were a man precisely in the sense in which we are men—having a human soul as well as a human body—then there is no conceivable ground on which he could justly be denominated God, except by the *external adjunction* of the Divine to the human nature. But how would this differ, save in degree, from the union of the Divine with the human nature of Moses, or Daniel, or Paul? And however intimate we may suppose this union to be, yet who would not be horrified at the idea of either of these individuals being denominated God? Yet I beg it may be considered in what possible mode of existence Jesus could be Jehovah, if he really possessed a true human soul or spirit, as well as a true human body. Could he have been God unless his most interior essence, which is usually understood by the soul, were Divine? In other words, must he not have had a Divine spirit or soul enveloped in a human body?—for the *inmost* of every living being is his spirit. Now this inmost principle in Jesus, Swedenborg affirms, was the essential Deity, and for this reason it was, that while he had a human mother, he had no human father. The spirit—the interior esse of the being—is, according to him, in all cases of generated existence, from the father, and the body from the mother.† The soul of Jesus was the indwelling Jehovah himself, and upon no other ground does it appear how he could truly and properly be termed God. Swedenborg therefore speaks of the incarnation as that “by which Jehovah

* I am conscious of a peculiar difficulty in framing my phraseology on this head so as to convey the real meaning intended—a difficulty arising from the established sense of the word *soul*. In popular parlance this term denotes the *most interior essence* of man; in Swedenborg's psychology it does not. According to him the soul itself is a form recipient of life from the Lord, which lives in the gross material body, and which is disengaged from it at death. It is the *psychical* part of the human organism, and is still a recipient form when separated from the earthly envelope. In saying then that our Lord had not a true human soul, I would not imply that he had not a *psychical* element in his constitution, as a man, and pertaining to what Swedenborg calls the *external man*, in contradistinction to the *internal*. In my use of the term, I conform from expediency, to the popular use, intending to denote by it the *most interior* principle of being in the Divine Savior.

† “That the soul is from the father, is doubted by no wise man; it is also manifestly conspicuous from minds, and likewise from faces which are types of minds, in descendants who proceed from fathers of families in a regular series: for the father returns as in effigy, if not in his sons, yet in his grandsons and great grandsons. That the soul is from the father, and the clothing from the mother, may be illustrated by things analogous in the vegetable kingdom; in this kingdom the earth or ground is the common mother, which in itself, as in a womb, receives and clothes seeds, yea as it were conceives, bears, brings forth and educates them, as a mother her offspring from the father.”—*Conj. Love*, 206.

“Who does not know, that the child has the soul and life from the father, and that the body is from the soul? What, therefore, is said more plainly, than that the Lord had his soul and life from Jehovah God? and, because the Divine cannot be divided, that the Divine itself was his soul and life? Wherefore the Lord so often called Jehovah God his *Father*, and Jehovah God called Him his *Son*.”—*T. C. R.* 82.

“That by the Son of Mary is meant the merely Human, is manifest from the generation of men, that the soul is from the father, and the body from the mother; for the

sent himself into the world," and if the above view be correct, this is in fact implied in its being said that the Father sent the Son into the world.*

Assuming then that Jesus in his inner essential nature is, in the absolute sense, Jehovah, then as there is but one Jehovah in the universe, all the attributes and perfections pertaining to Him must pertain to Jesus also. If there is a Trinity in Jehovah, there must be identically the same Trinity in Jesus. But this cannot be supposed to be a Trinity of *persons* without a total subversion of all rational ideas of personality. If there is but one Divine essence and that be designated by the word Jehovah, it may be pronounced impossible to conceive that essence as constituting, in any proper use of language, more than one *person*. Be it observed, however, that we are not denying the fact, nor objecting to the statement, of a *distinction*—a threefold distinction—in the Godhead, the nature of which will soon be more fully explained. We deny simply the propriety of applying the term *persons* to express this distinction. Indeed it is freely admitted by many Trinitarian writers of eminence, that the word in this relation is not to be understood in its ordinary and legitimate sense, but is employed merely as a succedaneum in place of one more suitable, which it is said that language unfortunately does not afford. Thus Professor Stuart in his Letters to Dr. Channing makes the full concession, that Trinitarians "use it merely because of the poverty of language; merely to designate our belief of a *real* distinction in the Godhead; but not to describe independent, conscious beings, possessing separate and equal essences and perfections." He adds, "I could wish indeed, on some accounts, that the word *person* had never come into the symbols of the

soul is in the seed of the father, and it is clothed with a body in the mother; or, what is the same, all the spiritual that man has, is from the father, and all the material is from the mother; as to the Lord, the Divine which He had was from Jehovah, the Father, and the human was from the mother; these two united are the Son of God."—*T. C. R.* 92.

* "Inasmuch as a clear idea prevails over an obscure idea, therefore most people, both simple and learned, think of the Lord as of a common man, like themselves, and not at the same time of his Divine; if they think of the Divine, then they separate it in their idea from the Human, and thereby also infringe the unity of person; if they are asked where is his Divine? they reply, from their idea, in heaven with the Father; the reason why they so say and so perceive, is, because they find a repugnance to think that the Human is Divine, and thus one with its Divine in heaven, not aware, that whilst in thought they thus separate the Divine of the Lord from his Human, they not only think contrary to their own doctrine, which teaches that the Divine of the Lord is in his Human, as the soul in the body; also, that there is unity of person, that is, that they are one person; but also, they charge that doctrine undeservedly with contradiction or fallacy, in supposing that the Human of the Lord, together with the rational soul, was from the mother alone, when yet every man is rational by virtue of the soul, which is from the father. In a word, they who separate the Divine from his Human, and do not think that the Divine is in his Human as the soul in the body, and that they are one person, may fall into erroneous ideas concerning the Lord, even into an idea as of a man separated from a soul; wherefore take heed to thyself, lest you think of the Lord as of a man like yourself, but rather think of the Lord as of a Man who is God. Attend, my reader; when you are perusing these pages, you may be led to suppose, that you have never, in thought, separated the Divine of the Lord from his Human, thus neither the Human from the Divine; but, I beseech you, consult your thought, when you have determined it to the Lord, whether you have ever considered, that the Divine of the Lord is in his Human as the soul in the body? rather have you not thought, yea, if you are now willing to make the inquiry, do not you at present think of his Human separately, and of his Divine separately? And when you think of his Human, do not you conceive it to be like the human of another man, and when of the Divine, do not you conceive it in your idea, to be with the Father? I have questioned great numbers, even the rulers of the church, and they have all replied that it is so.—*Athan. Creed.* 12.

churches, because it has been the occasion of so much unnecessary dispute and difficulty. But since it has been in common use so long, it is difficult now, perhaps impossible, altogether to reject it. If it must be retained, I readily concede that the use of it ought to be so guarded, as not to lead Christians generally into erroneous views of God.* But the truth undoubtedly is, that it is impossible so to guard it. Its use is inevitable abuse. No matter with what abatements and qualifications it may be employed by discriminating divines, with the mass of men it will not stand as the mere representative of a mysterious threefold distinction in the Divine Being, but it will practically amount to the setting forth of three Gods, and those who oppose the tripersonal scheme will be accused of rejecting a Trinity in any sense whatever. The matter is merely salved over by *saying* that these three are one God. The *saying* amounts to nothing when we come to the essential and practical conception of the inner man. In the recesses of the mind three persons are three divine beings, that is to say, three Gods; and so we are persuaded it will be found by every one who deals honestly with his own convictions. We do not say that the truth of one's belief on this head is of ready or easy detection; but hundreds who have been led to embrace the doctrines of Swedenborg, and have attained to a clear perception of his teaching on this subject, have confessed that such was previously their own internal belief, though they would at the time have rejected the charge with indignation of holding to a Tritheistic creed. They now, however, distinctly perceive that such was the fact. Swedenborg remarks upon this point, "The reason why the tenets of the present church, which are founded upon the idea of three Gods, derived from the doctrine of a trinity of persons literally understood, appear erroneous, after the idea of one God, in whom is a Divine Trinity, has been received in its stead, is, because, till this truth is received, we cannot see what is erroneous. The case herein is like a person, who in the night time, by the light of some stars only, sees various objects, especially images, and believes them to be living men; or like one, who in the twilight before sunrise, as he lies in his bed, fancies he sees goblins in the air, and believes them to be angels; or like a person, who sees many things in the delusive light of phantasy, and believes them to be real; such things, it is well known, do not appear according to their true qualities, until the person comes to enjoy the light

* Professor Stuart, in his controversy with Dr. Channing, insists that it is doing injustice to Trinitarians to represent them as using the word *person* in its ordinary acceptance as applied to *men*. They employ it, he says, merely as an approximation towards expressing the fact of a threefold distinction in the Divine essence which they receive because they believe it to be revealed, but of the nature of which they profess to know nothing. We think the complaint is not without a ground in truth, particularly when the Unitarian construction is brought to bear upon the opinions of such men as Professor Stuart and other enlightened defenders of the orthodox doctrine. The maintenance of a *real distinction* of some kind cannot, we think, be justly charged as inconsistent with a real belief in the essential unity of the Godhead. Trinitarians can afford to give up the use of the word *person* when the simple point maintained is that of an unknown distinction. But will Professor Stuart and his compeers so readily surrender the use of this term when the controversy is with those who agree with them in the fact of a *threefold distinction*, but at the same time utterly repudiate the use of the term in question by which to express it? We confess to at least a slight curiosity to know upon what ground, precisely, a verdict would be pronounced against the soundness of Swedenborg's doctrine of the Trinity, by such lukewarm Tripersonalists as Professor Stuart.

of the day, or in other words, until his understanding is broad awake. The case is the same with the spiritual things of the church, which have been erroneously and falsely perceived, and even confirmed, when genuine truths present themselves in their own light, which is the light of heaven. Who is there that cannot understand, that all tenets founded on the idea of three Gods must be interiorly erroneous and false? I say interiorly, because the idea of God enters into everything belonging to the church, religion, and worship; and theological matters have their residence above all others in the human mind, and among these the idea of God is the principal or supreme; wherefore if this be false, all beneath it, in consequence of the principle from whence they flow, must likewise be false or falsified: for that which is supreme, being also the inmost, constitutes the very essence of all that is derived from it; and the essence, like a soul, forms them into a body, after its own image; and when in its descent it lights upon truths, it even infects them with its own blemish and error. The idea of three Gods in theology may be compared to a disorder seated in the heart or lungs, in which the patient fancies himself to be in health, because his physician, not knowing his disease, persuades him that he is so; but if the physician knows it, and still persuades the patient that he is in health, he deserves the charge of deep malignity.”—(*Brief Expos.* 42.)

But however variously conceived—with whatever crudities or confusion mixed up in the popular belief—there is still a threefold distinction—a Trinity—in the Godhead. What is its nature? How is God three while at the same time he is one? An attempt to give an intelligible answer to this question does not involve the assumption of being able to fathom the infinite depths of the divine existence. There will always be a mystery in the theme which will baffle the powers of every created intelligence. “Who by searching can find out God? Who can find out the Almighty to perfection?” Still an approximation may be made towards the truth on this head. Somewhat of a consistent and fair view of this grand tenet of the Christian’s faith may be gained; and I would first state it under the illustrative form which Swedenborg so frequently employs—that of the obvious trinity in man, to be recognized in the distinction of *soul*, *body*, and *operation* or *proceeding energy*.* Here is clearly one being—one person—and yet a threefold distinction perfectly consistent with that oneness. Transfer this conception to the Deity; allowing at the same time for the difference between the finite and the infinite. Understand by the Father the primary ground of the divine being, or what Swedenborg terms the divine *Esse*, which is the divine Love—by the Son the divine Truth or Wisdom, which he terms the divine *Existere*—and by the Holy Spirit the *proceeding act or energy* flowing forth from the

* In the following passage Swedenborg draws the comparison from an angel.

“That in the Lord there is a trine, the Divine itself which is called the Father, the Divine Human which is called the Son, and the Divine Proceeding which is called the Holy Spirit, may be manifest from the Divine Essence—that one Divine by itself is not given, but there is a trine; this trine consists of *Esse*, *Existere*, and *Proceeding*; for *Esse* must needs *Exist*, and when it *Exists* it must *Proceed* that it may produce, and this trine is one essence, and one in person, and is God. This may be illustrated by comparison; an angel of heaven is trine and thereby one; the *esse* of an angel is that which is called his soul, and his *existere* is that which is called his body, and the *proceeding* from both is that which is called the sphere of his life, without which an angel neither exists nor is. By this trine an angel is an image of God, and is called a son of God, and also an heir, yea, also a god; nevertheless, an angel is not life from himself, but is a recipient of life; God alone is life from himself.”—*Athen. Creed*, 17.

united *Esse* and *Existere*, or Love and Wisdom, just as the energy or activity of a man is an emanation from his conjoint soul and body.

I am well aware that this will have, at first blush, the air of something transcendental and mystical, yet I think that upon a little reflection it will redeem itself from the charge. Swedenborg informs us, from the illumination vouchsafed him in the spiritual world, that Love, Affection, Feeling, is the underlying ground of all existence—that Love and Life are almost convertible terms—that whether in regard to creatures or the Creator, Thought or Intellect, or, if you please, Wisdom or Truth, is a mere *form* of Affection, and though they coexist together, and cannot be viewed apart from each other, yet in the order of our ideas we may conceive of one as being fundamental to the other, just as we may conceive of the heat of the sun as being primary in respect to its light, though we cannot think of the sun without embracing both its heat and light in our conception. In fixing our meditations upon God we are evermore to conceive that the divine Love is the *Esse* of his being and the divine Truth or Wisdom the *Existere* thence derived—the one indicated by the Father, the other by the Son, while the Holy Spirit is the Proceeding Sphere from both combined—the whole however still constituting but one person; for it would be just as reasonable, that is to say, unreasonable, to predicate three persons of a man because of the threefold distinction of his attributes, as to predicate Tripersonality of Jehovah on the same grounds.*

I know of no more important principle ever advanced to the world than the one above-mentioned, to wit, that Thought in all beings is a resultant of Love or Feeling—that a man could not possibly have a thought if there were not some latent love to prompt it. If this be true, all systems of mental philosophy or theology which make Intellect the primary principle of man's being, and Feeling, Emotion, or Passion, a certain form or quality of Intellect, must be radically erroneous. The direct reverse is the fact. And that such is in truth the general intuition of the human mind, when not obscured by theories of psychology, may readily be inferred from the universal acknowledgment, that *a man is as his heart is*, and his *heart is his love*. All are ready to grant that a man's *head* may abound in errors, yet if his *heart* is right his state is, on the whole, good. His *character* is determined by the state of his *heart*, implying that his *love* is the very groundwork of his being, and the ultimate truth will undoubtedly prove to be, what Swedenborg affirms, that this holds of his physical as well as of his spiritual life.† The bearing of this principle on the point before us will appear in what follows.

* "The reason why the idea of three Gods has principally arisen from the Athanasian Creed, where a trinity of persons is taught, is, because the word *person* begets such an idea, which is further implanted in the mind by the following words in the same Creed: 'There is one person of the Father, another of the Son, and another of the Holy Ghost;' and afterwards: 'The Father is God and Lord, the Son is God and Lord, and the Holy Ghost is God and Lord;' but more especially by these: 'For like as we are compelled by the Christian verity to acknowledge every person by Himself to be God and Lord, so are we forbidden by the Catholic religion to say there be three Gods or three Lords;' the result of which words is this, that by the Christian verity we are bound to confess and acknowledge three Gods and three Lords, but by the Catholic religion we are not allowed to say, or to make mention of three Gods and Lords; consequently we may have an idea of three Gods and Lords, but are not to make confession thereof with our mouth. Nevertheless, that the doctrine of the trinity in the Athanasian Creed is agreeable to truth, if only instead of a trinity of persons be there substituted a trinity of person, which trinity is in God the Savior Jesus Christ, may be seen in the DOCTRINE OF THE NEW JERUSALEM CONCERNING THE LORD."—*Brief Expos.* 33.

† "Every man's quality is known from his love; for love is the *esse* of the life of

In the economy of redemption Jehovah becomes incarnate— not the so-called second *person* of the Sacred Trinity, in contradistinction from the other two. Yet, in the nature of the case, when it comes to the matter of manifestation, it is the Divine Truth rather than the Divine Love, which assumes form and makes itself visible on the plane of humanity; because it is a general principle flowing from the constitution of being, that Love is manifested or becomes objective in the form of Truth; in other words, that Affection puts itself forth in the form of Intellect. Whatever be the form of Thought, Love is always latent in it, and constitutes its essential life, for Love is the *esse* of which Thought is the *existere*. Take a familiar illustration. A friend at a distance feels an affection for another friend, and wishes to *manifest* it. As however he cannot reach him, as to his interior consciousness, by the simple exercise of the feeling, he sits down and writes him a letter.* The letter is a *manifestation* of the heart's affection of the writer. He embodies his love in written language, and gives it expression, visibility, access. It thus becomes the *word* (*logos*) to his affection. The internal emotion is latently present as the life of the written thought, and only by means of the thought does it come into manifested form. In like manner Jehovah, in coming down to our level, and entering into the ultimates of humanity, comes in the form of the divine Truth, or the divine Logos, or Word, made flesh. In that form the divine Love or the Father is inwardly but not visibly present, just as the heat of the natural sun, which corresponds to Love, is present in its light, which corresponds to truth.† Is it not clear that the sun is objectively *manifested* to us by its

every one, the veriest life itself deriving thence its existence; such therefore as the love is which prevails with the man, such is the man; if it be self-love and love of the world, and consequently of revenge, hatred, cruelty, adultery, and the like, the man is a devil as to his spirit, or as to the interior man which lives after death, howsoever he appears in the external form. But if the prevailing love with man be the love of God and the love of his neighbor, and consequently the love of good and of truth, also of justice and honesty, he, howsoever he appears in the external form, is an angel as to his spirit, which lives after death. That man is altogether as his love, is a constant truth, evidenced by the angels in another life, who, when seen, appear as forms of love: the love itself not only shining forth, but also exhaling from them, so that you would say that they are throughout nothing but loves: the reason is, because all the interiors of an angel, as also of a man, are nothing but forms recipient of life, and because they are forms recipient of life, they are forms recipient of loves, for loves make the life of man. Since therefore the influent love and the recipient form are in agreement together, it follows that an angel or a man is of such a quality as his love is; and this not only in his organical principles, which are in the brain, but also in the whole body, for the body is nothing but an organ derived from its principles.”—A. C. 6872.

* “Every thought, speech, and writing derives its essence and life from him who thinks, speaks, and writes, the whole man being with his quality in those things.”—*Apoc. Rev.* 200.

† It is indeed to be admitted that a farther effort of mind is requisite to conceive the divine Truth as coming forth from its purely abstract form, and embodying itself in human nature. This is what Swedenborg denominates the Lord's passing “from first principles to last,” and though we must confess to the extreme difficulty of grasping the process, yet the fundamental idea may perhaps be illustrated by what we have already said of the rationale of creation, and by other parallel facts. There is doubtless in man's creations a certain image of those of God. In every construction of human art, for instance, a mental conception really ultimates or embodies itself in a material form. A man invents and fabricates a machine. That machine was in his mind as an archetypal truth before it was formed by his hand, and it was there as a *substance*, though a spiritual substance, like every thought. As foreign as it may be from our ordinary conceptions, we know not how to resist the conviction, that the ideal prototype of a steam-engine, for instance, is as real a *substance* as the engine itself, or the boat or car to which, when materialized, it is attached. When the machine is actually constructed, the original idea, or truth, is merely clothed with a material body. With man the process of thus clothing it is by the agency of his hands. But suppose him to be a spirit,

light?—and yet the *esse* of the sun, which is its heat, is continually more or less present with its *existere*, which is the light. So our Lord says that “he is in the Father and the Father in him”—that “he that seeth the Son seeth the Father also”—and the apostle, that “the fullness of the godhead dwells in him bodily.” This then may afford us some measure of illustrative light in reference to the great mystery of godliness, God manifest in the flesh, and especially as to the mutual relation, in the Divine Being, of Love and Wisdom, on which the distinction of Father and Son is founded. We recognize this distinction as *real*, but not *personal*. The Father and the Son constitute no more two persons, than do the soul and body in man. As to the Holy Spirit, this being but the emanating or proceeding sphere of the divine Love and Wisdom, can no more be deemed a person, than the effluent sphere of a man can be deemed a person separate from the man himself. A man’s sphere is as little distinct from his real personality as the fragrant sphere of a spice-tree is, in its origin, a distinct entity from the tree itself.

Have we not then in all this a view of the sacred Trinity at once intelligible, and at the same time free from the objections rightly urged against the commonly received doctrine? It is a Trinity of *person*, and not of *persons*. As the human mind is constituted, a Trinity of persons is to all practical apprehension a Trinity of beings, or in other words a Trinity of Gods; and such a conception of the divine nature must inevitably mould into conformity with itself the whole scheme of redemption. Consequently we see not how it is possible to gainsay the truth of what Swedenborg affirms in regard to the prevalent theology of the Christian church. “It is to be observed, that in the Apostles’ Creed it is said, *I believe in God the Father, in Jesus Christ, and in the Holy Ghost*; in the Nicene Creed, *I believe in one God, the Father, in one Lord Jesus Christ, and in the Holy Ghost*, thus only in one God; but in the Athanasian Creed it is, *In God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost*, thus in three Gods. But whereas the authors and favorers of this creed clearly saw that an idea of three Gods would unavoidably result from the expressions therein used, therefore, in order to remedy this, they asserted that one substance or essence belongs to the three; but still there arises from thence no other idea, than that there are three Gods unanimous and

and to have control over the material elements by means of the will, and we can see how the primary mental truth, which is the real soul of the construction, ultimates or embodies itself in the engine, that is, “passes from first principles to last.” It is doubtless in a mode somewhat analogous to this that the material world is elaborated from the spiritual, and this may give us a feeble conception of the mode by which “the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us,” though the comparison, in reference to its subject, is necessarily low and grovelling. But on such a sublime theme we can only aspire to an approximation towards the truth. If the progress of science should yet discover that everything material is finally resolvable into the light and heat of the sun, which is not unlikely, the main idea will be yet farther confirmed, for Swedenborg has shown us that the transition from the light and heat of the natural sun to that of the spiritual sun is by no means violent, as the one *corresponds* to the other by the law of cause and effect. But spiritual heat is the divine Love, and spiritual light is the divine Wisdom, or Truth; and we may suitably conclude the present note by the following extract, touching the relation of Truth to creation. “Scarcely any one knows at this day that there is any power in Truth, for it is supposed that it is only a word spoken by some one who is in power, which on that account must be done; consequently the Truth is only as breathing from the mouth, and as sound in the ear; when yet Truth and Good are the principles of all things in both worlds, the spiritual and the natural, by which principles the universe was created, and by which the universe is preserved; and likewise by which man was made; wherefore these two principles are all in all.”—*True Christ. Rel.* 224.

agreeing together: for when it is said of the three that their substance or essence is one and indivisible, it does not remove the idea of three, but confounds it, because the expression is a metaphysical one, and the science of metaphysics, with all its ingenuity, cannot of three persons, each whereof is God, make one; it may indeed make of them one in the confession of the mouth, but never in the idea of the mind. That the whole system of Christian theology at this day is founded on an idea of three Gods, is evident from the doctrine of justification, which is the head of the doctrinals of the Christian church, both among Roman Catholics and Protestants. That doctrine sets forth that God the Father sent His Son to redeem and save mankind, and gives the Holy Spirit to operate the same: every man who hears, reads, or repeats this, cannot but in his thought, that is, in his idea, divide God into three, and suppose that one God sent another, and operates by a third. That the same thought of a Divine Trinity distinguished into three persons, each whereof is God, is continued throughout the rest of the doctrinals of the present church, as from a head into its body, will be demonstrated in its proper place. In the meantime consult what has been premised concerning justification, consult the system of theology in general and in particular, and at the same time consult yourself, while listening to sermons at church, or while praying at home, whether you have any other perception and thought thence resulting, than of three Gods; and especially while you are praying or singing first to one, and then to the other two separately, as is the common practice. Hence is established the truth of the proposition, that the whole system of theology in the Christian world at this day, is founded on an idea of three Gods."—*Brief Expos.* 34, 35.

It will be at once obvious, that upon the basis laid by Swedenborg, the entire economy of redemption is a totally different thing from that which has so long been held forth to the world as the true scheme of the Scriptures. The Atonement of Christ, according to him, is *not* a vicarious sacrifice, concentrated in the simple passion of the cross, and made by one person of the sacred Trinity to appease the wrath or satisfy the justice of another. As the Father and the Son are really *one person*, there can be no claims of justice or of any other attribute predicable of the one party which does not equally hold in regard to the other. There cannot possibly be any such conflict in the demands of the divine perfections as is implied in the prevalent theology of the church. It is the *whole* Deity which comes into incarnation with a view to save the *whole* human race, so far as it can be done without infraction on the freedom of the creature. There is no *real wrath* on the part of the Deity to be propitiated, for wrath is not predicable of a Being whose very essential nature is Love and Mercy; and if there were, how could the sufferings of a divine Personage, endured by himself alone, be an atonement or expiation in behalf of sinners? If a subject has offended a sovereign, and that sovereign submits to the loss of one of his eyes, how is that

* "By the wrath of God is signified evil among men, which, because it is against God, is called the wrath of God; not that God is angry with man, but because man in consequence of his evil is angry with God, and because it seems to man, when he is punished and tormented for it, as is the case after death in hell, to come from God, therefore in the Word, wrath and anger, yea, evil, is attributed to God; but this in the sense of the letter only, this sense being written according to appearances and correspondences, but not in the spiritual sense, for in this latter there is no appearance and correspondence but the truth is in its light."—*Apoc. Rev.* 653.

a satisfaction to the claims of justice? Do the sufferings of innocence cancel the debt of guilt? The truth is, the current theory is built upon a view of the divine perfections which implies such a variance between them as is utterly irreconcilable with the essential unity of the Godhead. If the Son and the Father are essentially one, there is as much of wrath in the Son as there is in the Father, and as much of clemency in the Father as there is in the Son. They are perfectly *at one* in this respect, because they *are one*, and the alleged atonement made for sinners is a real *at-one-ment*, effected by the Lord's Divine Humanity between the sinning creature and the pure and holy Creator. By the light of the New Church teaching on this subject, we become aware of the huge inconsistencies of the current doctrine of Christendom touching this central *credendum* of revelation. With some exceptions the advocates of this doctrine profess with the mouth that God is one—that Jesus and Jehovah are the same—and yet, from the imagined exigencies of the scheme of redemption, they have introduced a view of the Trinity which is completely subversive of that unity. And when the charge to this effect is preferred against it, the reply is usually made in the form of a foreclosure on the ground of ignorance. Let the question be proposed to a strenuous asserter of what is termed the orthodox creed on this head, how it is, precisely, that three persons are consistent with one essence, and how it is that the penal sufferings of the Son avail to turn away the ire of the Father from the heads of the guilty, and he will reply that he *does not know*—that it is an unfathomable mystery—that it was never intended to be known—that it is the height of presumption to think of requiring anything beyond the simple declaration of the fact on the divine authority—a fact which faith is implicitly to receive, and about which reason is to ask no questions.

Now the receiver of Swedenborg's revelations has no hesitation to say, that he recognizes no claim as being made by the inspired Word on his *blind* credence of any truth announced therein. He knows nothing of this absolute subjection of his understanding to his faith. Though he arrogates to himself no peculiar prerogative of intelligence above his fellow-men, yet he has an inward assurance that every doctrine propounded to his reception comes to him accompanied with a *rational* evidence of its truth,—or in other words, that it establishes itself upon the *rational* plane of his mind—and while he does not assume to grasp the interior nature and essence of divine verities—while he holds to a needed *illustration* of his reason in conversing with spiritual themes—he yet feels authorized to look for an *intelligible* sense in which the Lord's being and working are announced to him. Such a sense he recognizes in what is affirmed of the economy of redemption.

On the prevalent system, the doctrine of vicarious atonement is central, cardinal, supreme; and out of it grows by legitimate issue the accredited dogma of

* Yet I beg it may not be inferred from this that the system in question does not recognize a moral antagonism between the state of the natural man and the attributes of the pure and holy Jehovah, one which must be removed before the soul can come into beatific conjunction with heaven. Evil and good are opposed to each other in their very nature, and to the *apprehension* of evil, good arrays itself in the aspect of wrath, just as the sun's light appears *hostile* to a diseased eye, though intrinsically as benignant to it as to a sound eye. The *state* of which this is the result must be rectified before man can come to the enjoyment of peace with God; and Swedenborg incessantly teaches that this rectification could never have taken place but upon the ground of Jehovah's becoming incarnate, and accomplishing what he did in our nature.

Justification by Faith alone. The efficacy of the atonement is secured, it is said, by the divine purpose in reference to a select (elect) number of the human race. Viewed in themselves they have no anterior claims to this merciful designation, nor have they any power of their own to avail themselves of the provision made for their salvation; for by reason of their depravity they are dead in trespasses and sins, and a dead man can no more move his little finger than his whole body.* In this emergency the discriminating grace of Heaven visits and regenerates them. They are *enabled* to believe on Christ set forth as a propitiation, and by this act of believing they are justified in the sight of God, and the law being satisfied by what Christ has done and suffered in their behalf, has no further demands upon them; they are henceforth fixed in a state of salvation, and at what is termed *the last day*, they are not judged according to works, but acquitted according to faith. It is indeed affirmed in this connexion that such a justification will be attended by a good life, but then the good life does not enter in as a constituent element into the real grounds of justification and salvation; they are rather a factitious *adjunction* to his faith, than a vital *conjunction* with it. A man is not saved *for* his good works, but *in spite* of his evil works. Having no merits of his own, he receives by imputation the merits of Christ, and standing complete in his righteousness, is adjudged to the fruition of eternal life.

To this view of the scheme of redemption the receiver of Swedenborg's teachings has serious objections. He objects to it as presenting the scheme mainly as an *outward act*—as a *forensic transaction*—as a procedure of an *objective* rather than of a *subjective* character. It so far, therefore, in his estimation overlooks the internal structure, nature, and wants of the human soul. It does not provide, in a clear and intelligible manner, for the deepest demands of the moral state of the sinner. It sets before him an *ab extra* work of atonement, which, while it is affirmed to satisfy the *absolute will* of Jehovah, does not satisfy the demands of internal consciousness. That men are actually regenerated, sanctified, and saved under this form of faith, they do not doubt; but such results they regard as rather *not prevented*, than directly *promoted*, by it.

* Here again I would put in a protest against an unwarrantable inference. No man, of whatever school in theology, has ever given a more debasing view of our fallen nature, or insisted with more emphasis upon the entire depravity which has come upon it, than Swedenborg. "Every man is born," says he, "of his parents into the evils of the love of self and of the world. Every evil which by habit has contracted as it were a nature, is derived into the offspring; thus successively from parents, from grandfathers, and from great-grandfathers, in a long series backwards. Hence the derivation of evil is at length become so great, that all of man's proper life is nothing else but evil. This continued derived evil is not broken and altered except by the life of faith and charity from the Lord. Man continually inclines and lapses into what he derives hereditarily from his parents. Hence he confirms with himself that evil, and also of himself superadds more. These evils are altogether contrary to spiritual life; they destroy it; wherefore unless man, as to spiritual life, is by the Lord conceived anew, born anew, and educated anew, that is, is created anew, he is damned, for he wills nothing else, and hence thinks nothing else, but what is of hell."—(A.C. 8550-52). But though sunk in spiritual death, man is not bereft of freedom of will, and consequently is not absolutely passive in regeneration. He still has power to *compel himself* to abstinence from particular acts of evil as sins against God, and when this is the case the divine good of the Lord flows in, and as he yields to the influx he continually receives new accessions of life and strength, by which he is eventually enabled to "work out his salvation." "It is a law of order, that as far as man accedes and approaches to God, which he should as altogether from himself, so far God accedes and approaches to man, and in the midst of him conjoins Himself with him." As to the precise point, however, at which spiritual life begins, he would no more think of defining it than one would of discriminating the exact moment when the light of the morning first begins to break in upon the previous darkness.

What then, it will be asked, as contrasted with this, is the doctrine of the New Church on the same head? We answer, Salvation is heaven. Heaven is not a locality into which one enters as he does into a room when the door is open. It is an internal state which enters into him. Heaven is love, and love is life, and life is character. It is a state wrought *in* the individual by actuality, and not merely reckoned to his account by putative transfer. It is utterly impossible that one can enjoy the happiness of heaven without possessing the character of which heaven essentially consists. This character cannot be imparted to him by the simple virtue of any forensic accrediting or legal estimation. He must actually possess, *in propria persona*, the very righteousness by which he is saved, and consequently by which he is justified. The sinner can by no possibility be saved except by a process by which he ceases to be a sinner. This process, according to the New Church theology, is wrought *in* the person of the sinner. According to Old Church theology, it is wrought *out of* him, in and through another being, and the benefit of it becomes his by imputation.* Here is the grand point of divergency between the system of Swedenborg and that of the prevailing church. Still, we repeat, we do not charge the current system with overlooking the element of life in the matter of salvation. We do not say that it does not insist upon it as a necessary appendage to faith. But what we do say is, that it is not a fundamental and indispensable constituent of that internal state or character upon which the salvation of the sinner depends. It is, as the schoolmen say, a *conditio cum qua*, but not a *conditio sine qua non*.

Now to this, which we have given as the established dogma on this point, we oppose not only the express and reiterated declarations of our Lord, that judgment is to proceed, and destiny be determined, according to life, but also the absolute, inevitable, and eternal necessity of things. We contend that

* "That it may be known that the imputation of the merit and righteousness of Jesus Christ is impossible, it is necessary to know what his merit and righteousness are. The merit of our Lord the Saviour is redemption, and this was the subjugation of the hells, the establishment of order in the heavens, and afterwards the institution of a church; thus redemption was a work purely divine. Since redemption was a work purely divine, and of the Lord alone, and that is his merit, it follows, that this cannot be applied, ascribed, and imputed to any man, any more than the creation and preservation of the universe. Since, therefore, the merit and righteousness of the Lord are purely divine, and since things purely divine are such that, if they were applied and ascribed, man would die in an instant, and, like a fire-brand thrown into the naked sun, would be so consumed that scarcely any spark would remain of him; therefore the Lord with his Divine approaches to angels and to men by light tempered and moderated according to the faculty and quality of each, thus by what is adequate and accommodated; in like manner He approaches by heat. In the spiritual world there is a sun, in the midst of which is the Lord; from that sun He flows in by light and heat into the whole spiritual world, and into all who are there; all the light and all the heat there are thence. The Lord from that sun flows in with the same light and the same heat also into the souls and minds of men: that heat in its essence is his divine love, and that light in its essence is his divine wisdom; this light and that heat the Lord adapts to the faculty and quality of the recipient angel and man, which is done by means of spiritual *auras* or atmospheres which convey and transfer them: the Divine itself, immediately encompassing the Lord, makes that sun. This sun is distant from the angels, as the sun of the natural world is from men, in order that it may not touch them with its naked rays, and thus immediately; for thus they would be consumed like a fire-brand thrown into the naked sun, as was said. Hence it may be evident, that the merit and righteousness of the Lord, because they are purely divine, cannot possibly be introduced by imputation into any angel or man; yea, if any drop of it, without being thus moderated, as was said, should touch them, they would instantly be tortured like those laboring with death, struggling with their feet, staring with their eyes, and they would expire. This was made known in the Israelitish church by this, that no one could see God and live."—T. C. R. 640, 641.

a sinner *cannot* be saved, even by omnipotence itself (though this is not the sphere of omnipotence), but upon the ground of the actual personal possession or that internal principle of *good* in which the very essence of salvation consists. At the same time we allow, on the ground of Swedenborg's teaching, no original merit to the sinner saved which is to be regarded as the effective procuring ground of his acceptance; for he has no good of his own; all is by influx from the Lord, who is Goodness itself and Life itself. Yet it is a goodness *in* the man, and not *out of* him, in virtue of which he is saved, for his salvation is the very goodness itself of which he becomes the subject. This goodness, moreover, could never have been acquired but by the mediation of the Divine Redeemer. There was an absolute necessity for the intervention of the God-man Mediator in order to the putting away of the obstacles which opposed the recovery of an apostate and ruined race to a new union with Him whose "favor is life and his loving-kindness better than life." In no other way could be effected that infusion of divine good, righteousness, and peace which constitute the element of salvation. The dominion of hell was the impediment to be conquered. But the dominion of hell was the active agency of malignant evil spirits continually bearing down, by their infernal influx, upon the souls, and at length even upon the bodies, of men, and threatening to engulf them in a common perdition. According to the eternal laws of order Jehovah could approach neither to the evil spirits of earth or hell without the assumption of the Humanity, and the consequent creation of a medium of communication. "The reason," says Swedenborg, "that redemption could not have been performed but by God incarnate, that is, made man, is because Jehovah God, such as he is in his infinite essence, cannot approach to hell, much less enter into it; for he is in the purest and first things. Wherefore Jehovah God, being in himself such, if he should only blow upon those who are in hell, He would kill them in a moment." He therefore acts upon all spirits *according to their nature*, and in a way to preserve inviolate their moral freedom. By assuming our infirm humanity he put himself into a condition that enabled him to receive their temptations into himself and to combat and overcome them in a mode somewhat analagous, though on an infinitely grander scale, to that by which the Christian combats and overcomes them in himself. The sum total of these conquests constituted his redemption-work. Every successive victory of this nature was at the same time a step in the glorification of his natural Human principle, till at last this process was consummated by the passion of the cross, which was the final act of temptation and suffering, when the entire Humanity became glorified, or, as we may say, *divinified*, just as, on a smaller scale, every spiritual triumph of a Christian goes in a degree to the sublimation and spiritualization even of his grosser nature, the final result of which may be seen in the glorified bodies of Moses and Elijah when they appeared with the transfigured Saviour on the holy mount. He is indeed unconscious of this inward process going on within him during life, nevertheless the fact is so, and the result of it is, that in the end his "vile body is fashioned like unto Christ's glorious body."

Now this we learn from Swedenborg was the sum and substance of what Jehovah Jesus accomplished in the work of man's redemption. It was to afford a medium by which a new communication of spiritual life could be vouchsafed to degenerate man, while at the same time no infraction should be made

of his essential liberty as a free agent. "Man's body," says Mr. Noble, "operates as a medium by which his soul acts upon persons and things around him; and by which, again, impressions from these are conveyed to his soul; thus, man's body is, in both respects, the medium of communication between his soul and things around it. Just so, the Glorified Humanity of Jesus Christ is the medium by which the Divine Essence acts upon man, and by which, again, man has access even to the Inmost Divine Essence. In both respects, then—as conveying the gifts of salvation from God to man, and as affording access to God—the Glorified Humanity of Jesus Christ is the medium of communication. The analogy is most perfect and complete. As man's soul, without his body, cannot communicate with the world; and objects in the world could not make their state, their presence, nor even their existence, known to his soul—the body being a medium expressly formed for communication with the world, and given to the soul for that purpose; so, when man had sunk into the natural state in which he now exists, the pure and unclothed Deity could no longer operate upon him in a saving manner, and he could have no access to, no adequate communication with, the Author of his existence. Therefore Jehovah, out of his infinite love to mankind, clothed himself with Human Nature; and having glorified that Human Nature by wonderful divine means, so as to make it the express image, and adequate instrument of action, of his Essential Divinity, he has provided an eternal Medium of communication between himself and his creatures. *The operation, then, of his Glorified Human Form, which has become the Investiture, and, as it were, the very Body, of the Godhead, in affording to man the means of approaching to God, and in conveying the gifts of salvation—the communications of the Holy Spirit, from God to man—is what is meant by the Scripture doctrine of the mediation of Jesus Christ.*"

What, therefore, is usually termed the *the influences of the Holy Spirit*, which are the fruits of the Saviour's mediation and sent forth for the regeneration and sanctification of men, is in fact the operation of that divine sphere of life and spiritual energy which continually proceeds from his glorified Humanity, and while it draws the soul by hallowed attraction to its source, is at the same time continually conquering the opposing spheres of hell, and, operating by charity and faith, is planting the spirit of heaven still deeper and deeper in the heart. Man is thus regenerated more and more, and his full recovery to eternal life secured, not by the *imputed* benefits of a plan of redemption accomplished *without* himself, but by the *experienced* virtue of Union to the Divine Humanity of the Lord, which was assumed not to pacify the wrath of the Father, but to express the infinite love of the *whole* Deity to his fallen creatures. The work by which this was accomplished, far from being confined to the simple death on the cross, was extended through the whole earthly life of the Redeemer, and the real efficacy of his mediation was witnessed rather by the blood of Gethsemane than by that of Calvary, for *that* was extorted in his spiritual combats, which were more especially the essence of his redemption.

I regret that I am precluded by my necessary limits from entering more largely into the details of Swedenborg's developments of the foregoing and all its cognate subjects. It would be easy to show that in point of logical consistency, conformity to scripture, and practical power, no system of doctrine could ever stand a more rigid test. But though I am well aware of failing to do justice to

the theme by such a meagre sketch, I shall still cherish the hope that my lack of service in this respect may be supplied by an actual resort, on the part of my readers, to the body of the writings themselves, which, by unfolding the deepest arcana of man's spiritual nature, shed a flood of light upon the mass of Christian doctrines which involve them. The completest compend of the system is to be found in the work entitled the "True Christian Religion." I am forced however to say, that this work will inevitably have a very singular and perhaps incredible air to any one who is not prepared to admit the *psychological* postulates upon which it is built. It goes all along upon the assumption that man is a spirit clothed with a body—that he is a man rather *from* his spirit than from his body—that his two great principles are Will and Understanding, the one the correlate of Good, the other of Truth—that in his interior being he is even now a denizen of the spiritual world and in perpetual and vital connexion with its numberless tenants, both good and evil—and that the fact is possible, and, in Swedenborg's case, real, of an open and sensible communication with that world, in virtue of which its laws and phenomena may be and have been disclosed to us. All this is undoubtedly contrary to the prevailing impressions and belief of the world, and therefore an immense barrier is interposed to the ready reception of the doctrinal views propounded by the herald of the New Church. But considering the magnitude of the interests at stake, it is not improbable, that in the Divine Providence some overwhelming demonstration shall be given, from some other source, of the truth of the *psychology* of Swedenborg's system, which shall ere long compel the attention of thousands to his writings, whereas they are now comparatively so few, that a "child may count them." Time will tell.

And here the transition is easy to Swedenborg's *doctrine of the soul and the state after death*, which holds so prominent a place in his system. Of a great multitude of subjects it can properly be said that they commend themselves to the *reflecting mind*. They can hardly be expected to be duly appreciated except by those who are accustomed to ponder deeply and seriously upon the various themes that address themselves to their interest. But to the right entertainment of the subject of the future life and destiny of man, it would seem that this condition could scarcely be deemed requisite. This is a subject of such universal and commanding import to every human being, that the natural impression would be that no one can be indifferent to it without foregoing his claims to rationality. If a man thinks at all, it is difficult to conceive of his not thinking upon this. If he is assured that he shall die, can he but be solicitous to know whether he shall live again? And if assured, on competent authority, that he shall, what more natural, more spontaneous, more imperative, than that the conditions of his future being should press themselves upon his anxious thoughts! Should we not suppose that "every third thought would be his grave," together with the momentous realities that lie beyond it? If man is indeed, as Milton describes him, a being "of large discourse looking before and after," we could scarcely resist the belief, that when once assured even of the *possibility* of information on this head, he would as it were, *rush* to the oracle to have his absorbing problems solved and his restless heart relieved of its load of uncertain forebodings. That there *is*, however, notwithstanding all *a priori* grounds for the deepest emotion and the intensest study on this theme a comparative mental quiescence and apathy in regard to it, is beyond question.

The fact is doubtless mainly to be accounted for on the ground of an inveterate and deep-seated impression, that no farther light is to be anticipated in respect to the mysteries of a future life than is afforded by the *general* and *vague* intimations of Holy Writ. The volume of inspiration teaches clearly the doctrine of immortality, and gives assurance of a heaven and a hell. But it discloses little of the *nature* of either. It goes into no minute detail. It does not with distinct enunciation, declare the inseparable connexion, according to the fixed laws of our being, between the essential character of our present life, and the form of destiny in which it issues in another. We are indeed taught that "he that soweth to the flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption, and that he that soweth to the spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting." But this announcement leaves much in the dark as to the *exact nature* of the relation involved and as to the *specific qualities* of the several conditions of the good and bad in another world. Yet upon these points the mind, when left to its own impulses, solicitously craves illumination. It is prompted to say of this knowledge, "Who shall go up for us to heaven to bring it unto us?" All other knowledge sinks into insignificance when compared with this, and yet the practical conviction of the Christian world undoubtedly is, that it is unattainable—that we are hopelessly shut up to the scanty measure of light afforded by the letter of the sacred writings.

It becomes then a question of serious bearing, whether there be in fact a possibility of higher and more definite attainments on this score. Is it conceivable—is it true—that the Most High himself has, through a chosen instrument, lifted the curtain of futurity from before us? Has the interdict been removed? Has the "eternal blazon" been made? Has access been granted to the sanctuary of the secret which lies beyond the grave? Who can be indifferent to the answer that shall be returned to these questions? For myself, I am satisfied the answer is to be given in the affirmative, and I would fain, if possible, make the reader participate in my assurance.

The claim advanced is doubtless a high one—one too that must naturally be expected to encounter the force of a host of adverse pre-conceptions; and we readily admit that there are certain conditions on which alone such a claim can be listened to for a moment.

1. *The alleged disclosures must not conflict with anything revealed in the Scriptures.* They may possibly go *beyond* the clear and distinct revelations of the inspired word, but, if true, they cannot be in anything *contrary* to them, for this would be to make Divine Truth contradict itself. Yet it is no disparagement to Scripture to maintain that God may grant us light beyond the measure of its literal sense. This can be denied only on the ground of his own express declaration that he has precluded himself from augmenting the knowledge of his creatures on the subject of the future life. But no evidence of this can be produced. He is free to grant higher illumination if he sees adequate reason for it; but it is certain that a subsequent revelation from him can never be inconsistent with *a priori*.

2. *They must proceed upon the ground of an adequate motive and end on the part of God for bestowing them.* Purposes worthy of infinite wisdom and benignity must be clearly seen to be answered by a special intervention of this nature. It is inconceivable that it should occur unless there were a *nodus dignus vindice*—an occasion sufficient to warrant a departure from the ordinary method of his Providence

in imparting instruction on this head to the world. Such an occasion Swedenborg affirmed to exist in the occurrence of the Lord's Second Advent, in connexion with these revelations. This event, which is altogether spiritual in its nature, was to be the ushering in of a new dispensation, termed in the Scriptures the New Jerusalem, the sublime ends of which could not be attained without a new influx of light in reference to the intimate connexion of the natural and spiritual world, and a development of the laws by which *character elaborates destiny*. A just estimate of Swedenborg's claims can therefore only be formed in connexion with the settlement of a great question of Prophecy—the nature, epoch, and circumstances of the Second Coming of Christ, and also of the Last Judgment, with which it was to be associated. Investigation on this point is earnestly solicited.

3. *They must be such as to be entirely consistent with what we know to be the nature and constitution of man.* They must recognize as true all the fundamental laws and principles of our economy, established by the testimony of consciousness or by the inductions of true science and philosophy. This lays a foundation for *internal evidence* of the truth of the alleged disclosures, and in the present state of the human mind this species of evidence is indispensable.

4. *The scope and tendency of such revelations must be decidedly and pre-eminently practical.* They must not be given solely for the purpose of gratifying curiosity, or ministering to vain speculation. This were an end unspeakably below what can be believed of an All-wise Being. In his estimate Truth itself is ever subordinate to Goodness, and the legitimate bearing of every alleged revelation from him upon *life*, is the ultimate criterion of its claims.

The question then arises whether the asserted disclosures of Swedenborg answer to these conditions, and whether the evidence of their truth from other sources is adequate to meet the demands of the intelligent and reflecting inquirer. In the attempt to answer this question I shall rely mainly on the presentation of his statements relative to the grand point at issue—the nature of the soul and its state after death, leaving it to produce its own effect, according to its own evidence, on the mind of the reader. In doing this it will of course be understood that I am not exhibiting the conclusions of a philosopher—the fruit of his own researches and reasonings—but the oracles of a Seer. It would be easy, however, to show that even in the former character they are entitled to the profoundest consideration of all enlightened minds. The evidence is ample that apart from supernatural endowments no man has ever preferred stronger claims to be listened to with respect in any results he may have announced, either of physical or metaphysical research. His claims in this character are beginning to be acknowledged, as his scientific labors make themselves known to competent judges, who are more and more astonished that a luminary so resplendent should have remained so long clouded, although in the judgment of his adherents he has merely been “dark through the excess of light.” His natural have been eclipsed by his supernatural endowments. An asserted illuminism transcending the native sphere of the human faculties, has stifled the credit of stupendous powers within that sphere, which is now slowly but surely being rendered by the inevitable onward march of Truth, carrying the awards of Justice in its hand.

I repeat, however, that in displaying Swedenborg's doctrine of the soul, I am

submitting to the judgment of reason what reason itself could never have reached by its unassisted powers, and I do it in the confident persuasion that whether true or false, the disclosures in question present a miracle equally great. For it requires but a knowledge of their true character for any one to be convinced that no human intellect, under any kind of exaltation, could ever have fabricated the scheme from its own resources; and as to its being the creation of a distempered brain, it is so profoundly philosophical—so nicely discriminative—so harmoniously consistent—so consecutive and logical in its arguments—so confident in its appeals to the consciousness of reason—so wanting in every feature indicative of a mind unhinged—that the idea of its supernatural origin is much the most credible of the two. But the judgment of the reader will justly demand the grounds of my own.

I remark then that the foundation fact of all Swedenborg's disclosures relative to the future life is, that man is a spirit clothed with a body, and that the form of the body is derived from the form of the spirit—that the soul or spirit, independent of the body, is the true and real man—that the tenement of the body, laid aside at death, is never resumed—that when the separation between the two great elements of our nature takes place, man emerges into the world of spirits in a perfect human form, with all the grand distinguishing powers and attributes of his being as a man wholly retained.* As the sensitive principle when in the body was spiritual and not material, so the true man, when detached from the body, retains all his sensitive faculties, only heightened, refined, and made vastly more exquisite either for pleasure or pain.

The following extracts from different parts of his writings will place Swedenborg's positions on this head distinctly before the reader.

* "The difference between a man in the natural world, and a man in the spiritual world, is, that the one man is clothed in a spiritual body, but the other in a natural body; and the spiritual man sees the spiritual man, as clearly as the natural man sees the natural man; but the natural man cannot see the spiritual man, and the spiritual man cannot see the natural man, on account of the difference between natural and spiritual; what kind of difference this is, may be described, but not in a few words."—*Last Judgment, Part II.* 36.

"That the form of the spirit of man is the human form, or that the spirit is a man even as to form, may be manifest from what hath been shown in several articles above, especially in those where it was inculcated that every angel is in the perfect human form, n. 73 to 77; and that every man is a spirit as to his interiors, n. 432 to 444; and that angels in heaven are from the human race, n. 311 to 317. This may be discerned still more clearly from this consideration, that man is a man by virtue of his spirit, and not by virtue of his body; and that the corporeal form is attached [or added] to the spirit according to the form of the spirit, and not contrariwise, for the spirit is clothed with a body according to its form; wherefore the spirit of man acts into singular, yea, into the most singular parts of the body, inasmuch that the part which is not acted upon by the spirit, or in which the spirit is not active, doth not live: that this is the case, may be known to every one from this single circumstance, that thought and will act upon all and singular the things of the body, thus that the body is altogether at their disposal, in such a manner that everything concurs, and what doth not concur, is not a part of the body, and is also cast out as containing in it no living principle: thought and will are of the spirit of man, and not of the body. The reason why the spirit doth not appear to man in a human form, after it is released from the body, nor is seen in another man [whilst living], is, because the organ of the sight of the body, or its eye, so far as it sees in the world, is material; and what is material seeth nothing but what is material, whilst what is spiritual seeth what is spiritual; wherefore when the material principle of the eye is veiled, and deprived of its co-operation with what is spiritual, then spirits appear in their form, which is human, not only spirits who are in the spiritual world, but also the spirit which is in another whilst he is yet in his body."—*H. & H.* 453.

"With regard to the soul, of which it is said it shall live after death, it is nothing else than the man himself, who lives in the body, that is, the interior man, who by the body acts in the world, and who gives to the body to live; this man, when he is loosed from the body, is called a spirit, and appears then altogether in a human form, yet cannot in any wise be seen by the eyes of the body, but by the eyes of the spirit, and before the eyes of the latter, appears as a man in the world, has senses, namely, of touch, of smell, of hearing, of seeing, much more exquisitely than in the world; has appetites, cupidities, desires, affections, loves, such as in the world, but in a more excellent degree; thinks also as in the world, but more perfectly; converses with others; in a word, he is there as in the world, insomuch that if he does not reflect upon the circumstance of his being in the other life, he knows no other than that he is in the world, which I have occasionally heard from spirits: for the life after death is a continuation of life in the world.

"This then is the soul of man which lives after death. But lest the idea should fall upon somewhat unknown by using the term soul, in consequence of the conjectures and hypothesis concerning it, it is better to say the spirit of man, or if you prefer it the interior man, for it appears there, altogether as a man, with all the members and organs that man has, and it is also the man himself in the body; that this is the case, may also be manifest from the angels seen, as recorded in the Word, who were all seen in the human form, for all the angels in heaven have a human form, because the Lord has, who after his resurrection appeared so often as a man. That an angel and the spirit of a man is a man in form, is because the universal heaven from the Lord has [a tendency] to conspire to the human form, whence the universal heaven is called the Grand Man: and because the Lord lives in every individual in heaven, and by influx from the Lord the universal heaven acts upon every individual, therefore every angel is an image thereof, that is, a form most perfectly human; in like manner man after death. All the spirits, as many as I have seen, which are thousands and thousands, have been seen by me altogether as men, and some of them have said that they are men as in the world, and have added, that in the life of the body they had not the least belief that it would be so; many have expressed concern, that mankind are in such ignorance concerning their state after death, and that they think so vainly and emptily concerning the soul, and that most persons who have thought more deeply on the subject, have made the soul into somewhat as it were a subtile aerial, which idea must needs lead into that insane error, that it is dissipated after death."—A. C. 654, 655.

"The generality do not apprehend, that spirits and angels have sensations much more exquisite than men in the world, viz. sight, hearing, smelling, somewhat analagous to taste, and touch, and especially the delights of the affections; yet, if they had only believed that their interior essence was a spirit, and that the body, together with its sensations and members, is adapted only to uses in the world, and that the spirit and its sensations and organs are adequate to uses in the other life, in this case, *they would come of themselves, and almost of their own accord, into ideas concerning the state of their spirits after death*; for, in such a case, they would think with themselves, that the spirit of each is that very man himself who thinks, and who lusts, who desires and is affected; and, further, that all the sensitive principle which appears in the body, is properly of the spirit,

and belongs to the body only by influx; and these things afterwards they would confirm with themselves by many considerations, and thereby, at length, would be delighted with the things appertaining to their spirit, more than with the things appertaining to their body. In reality, also, this is the case, that it is not the body which sees, hears, smells, feels, but its spirit: wherefore, when the spirit is stripped of the body, it is then in its own sensations in which it had been when in the body, and this in a more exquisite degree; for corporeal things, as being respectively gross, rendered the sensations obtuse, which also became still more so in consequence of being immersed in earthly and worldly things. This I can positively affirm, that a spirit hath more exquisite sight than a man in the body, and also more exquisite hearing, and, what will seem surprising, a more exquisite sense of smelling, and especially of touch; for spirits see each other, hear each other, and touch each other. He who believes in a life after death, might also conclude this from the consideration, that no life can be given without sense, and that the quality of the life is according to the quality of the sense; yea, that the intellectual principle is nothing but an exquisite sense of interior things, and the superior intellectual principle, of spiritual things; hence, also, the things of the intellectual principle and of its perceptions, are called the internal senses. With the sensitive principle of man immediately after death, the case is this: as soon as man dies, and the corporeal parts grow cold, he is raised up into life, and, on this occasion, into the state of all sensations, insomuch that, at first, he scarcely knows any other than that he is still in the body; for the sensations in which he is, lead him so to believe; but when he perceives that he hath more exquisite sensations, and this especially when he begins to discourse with other spirits, he then takes notice that he is in another life, and that the death of his body was the continuation of the life of his spirit, &c. &c.—But I am aware, that the things which have been heretofore said, will not be believed by those who are immersed in corporeal, terrestrial, and worldly things, that is, by such of them as hold those things for an end; for these have no apprehension of anything but of what is dissipated by death. I am aware, also, that neither will they believe who have thought and inquired much about the soul, and have not, at the same time, comprehended that the soul is man's spirit, and the spirit is the very man which liveth in the body; for these cannot conceive any other notion about the soul, than that it is some principle of thought, or of flame, or of ether, which only acts into the organical forms of the body, and not into the purer forms which are of the spirit in the body; and thereby, they conceive it to be such a principle as is dissipated with the body; and this is especially the case with those, who have confirmed themselves in such notions by views of the subject, being puffed up through the persuasion of their own superior wisdom.”—A. C. 4622.

“That man is a spirit as to his interiors has been proved to me by much experience. To adduce the whole of it would fill many pages. I have conversed with spirits as a spirit, and I have conversed with them as a man in the body. When I conversed with them as a spirit, they knew no other than that I myself was a spirit in a human form as they were. Thus my interiors were visible to them, for when I conversed with them as a spirit my material body did not appear. That man is a spirit as to his interiors is manifest, because after the separation of the body, which takes place at death, he still lives as before. It has

been given me to converse with almost all the deceased whom I ever knew in the life of the body, with some for hours, with others for weeks and months, and with others for years, that I might be confirmed in this truth and testify it to others."—*H. & H.* 437.

Here then is Swedenborg's philosophy of the Soul. It is no other than the *man himself* in the essential elements of his nature, to which the material body is a mere temporary appendage, designed to enable it to accomplish its appropriate uses in a material world. The soul lives as the pervading animating principle in every the minutest part of the body, and, to use a homely comparison, is to it what the concealed man within is to the Automaton Chess-player. And what is there, I may ask, in this view to which the most enlightened mind can object? Whether tried by the touchstone of reason or revelation, does it not commend itself by its intrinsic rationality and probability? Are we not conscious of a secret intuition that it must be so from the very laws of our being? When we think, without reference to a creed, of our departed friends and relatives, do we not instinctively think of them as existing as perfect men and women, and in the form which they wore on earth? And in this fact do we not read the triumph of inborn perception over outward dogmatic teaching? Death, according to this view, is merely the laying aside of the garment of flesh, from which man emerges to his true and only resurrection—the resurrection of the spirit into the world of spirits.

And would we, if we could, constrain
Their unbound spirits into bonds again?

Of what conceivable use can be the mouldered fabric of dust to the emancipated soul? Why should its vesture of light ever be exchanged for the dull robe of quickened clay? It has a body suited to the sphere in which it dwells. Does it need another, any more than the winged *papilio* needs the reptile tenement in which it grovelled on the earth? How dreary, compared with this, is the view which has obtained currency in Christendom, that man exists as a pure formless spirit in the invisible world for an indefinite tract of ages, till at what is called the last day—the final consummation—the disembodied spirit is again to be united with the laid off tabernacle of flesh, and in this body to abide for ever? This is doubtless the prevalent idea of the resurrection and the future life, received from the apprehended import of the Scriptures, when yet the Scriptures are capable of an interpretation that fully accords with Swedenborg's statements on these points. The process of fair exposition brings us to the same results with those of the actual asserted revelations made to him in that world where the truth is realized in existent facts. The phenomena which he beheld in that world are the very ones which he *ought* to have beheld, provided the Scriptures in their true meaning are true.*

* "The belief, however, of the doctrine of the re-union of the same body to the soul, has been permitted by Divine Providence, as Swedenborg observes, for a good reason; namely, that if mankind had not believed in the resurrection of the body, they would often have not believed in any resurrection at all. For it being denied by some, that the soul or spirit is any distinct substance: it being asserted by others, that there is no evidence as to what it is, so as to enable us either to deny or affirm; and with regard to most persons, anything relating to it being beyond their comprehension; the doctrine of its resurrection would long since have been rejected altogether, had not a belief in the resurrection of the body been permitted; for the body being a carnal, natural, corporeal, and sensual object, and hence more within the comprehension of the natural mind,

I shall promise myself the reader's indulgence if I insert, in this connexion, the following *Memorable Relation* from a portion of Swedenborg's *Spiritual Diary* just published in Germany from the manuscript copy, and which has never before appeared in English.

"When any person enters the spiritual world after death, which is for the most part on the third day after his breath had ceased, he appears to himself as in a similar life to that in which he had been in the world—in a similar house, chamber, and bed—in a similar dress, outer and inner—and in a similar household society. If he had been a king or a prince, (he appears to be) in a similar palace; if a peasant, in a similar cottage; rustic things surround the one, splendid things the other. This happens to every one after death, in order that death may not appear as death, but as a continuation of life, and that the ultimate of the natural life may be the primary of the spiritual life, and that the soul may hence advance onwards to its goal, which will be either in heaven or hell. That such a similarity in all things should appear to the recently deceased is because there remains to them the same mind that they had in the world; and because the mind is not only in the head, but also in the whole body, therefore the body is similar to it, for the body is an organ of the mind, and is continued from the head, consequently the mind is the man himself, but *then* not a material man, but a spiritual man. And because the man is the same after death, there are given, as to the ideas of his mind, similar things to those which he had at home in the world; but this continues only for the space of a few days. That the mind is in the whole body, and is the man himself who lives after death, appears manifestly from the instantaneous speech of the mouth and action of the body flowing from the will and thought of the mind, for the mouth instantly utters what the mind thinks, and the body instantly executes what the mind wills. The erroneous belief that man lives after death as a mere soul or mind, and that not under the form of a man, but under the form of a breath or respiration, or a bubble of air, has arisen from man's not knowing that the mind constitutes the interior form of the whole body. When the new comers into the spiritual world are in this first state, the angels approach them and give them joy of their happy arrival, and at first have great pleasure in thus conversing with them, as they know that they then think nothing else but that they are yet living in the former world; wherefore they ask them what they think of the life after death, to which the comers reply in accordance with their previous ideas—some, that they do not know—some, that men are spirits or ethereal forms—some, that they are transparent aerial bodies—some, that they are flying phantoms, of which a part inhabit the ether or air, a part the waters, and a part the middle of the earth—and some that souls are, like the angels, in the stars—while others deny that a man lives at all after death. Upon hearing this the angels say, 'Welcome hither; we will open to you something new, which you have previously neither known nor believed, to wit, that every man lives a man after death, in a body altogether as he had lived before.' To this the novitiate spirits reply, 'This is not possible; whence has he a body? Does not his body lie, with all that belonged to it, lifeless in the sepulchre?' To this the angels

'the members of the external church can the more readily believe in its resurrection, and thus preserve in themselves that idea of a resurrection, and hence of a future life, of which, otherwise, they would have been deprived.'"—*Clissold's Letter*, p. 161.

pleasantly respond, 'We will give you ocular demonstration (of the fact).' They then say, 'Are you not men in a perfect form? Look at yourselves; handle yourselves; and yet you have died from the natural world. That you have not previously known this, is because the next state of life after death is altogether similar to the last state of life before death.' On hearing this the new guests are struck with amazement, and from the joy of their hearts exclaim, 'Thanks be to God that we still live, and that death has not blotted us out of being!' I have often heard that novitiates are thus instructed respecting the posthumous life, and that they are thus rejoiced in their resurrection."—*Sp. Diary*, P. vii., p. 126.

We have in the above extracts statements upon which we are called to pass judgment. They are either true or false. If true, they establish Swedenborg's general claim to supernatural illumination. If false, it is still a matter to be accounted for, as is the case in a hundred similar relations of his, how a mere dreaming phantasy should assume so rational and philosophical an aspect—how it should accord so entirely with the conclusions of the soundest reason, judging from the psychological structure of man. We contend that what he affirms he saw and heard in the spiritual world are what he *should* have seen and heard, provided the mind can rest with the least assurance upon its clearest inductions. Consequently a statement which bears such internal marks of probability cannot be an argument against the validity of his claims. The intrinsic likelihood of a fact said to be revealed cannot justly be urged against the probability of the revelation, especially when a host of other considerations may be cited in favor of the supposition. A man's telling the truth is certainly not the strongest evidence of his being a liar. Objections then must be brought from some other source, and I think it will be found that they all resolve themselves into that based upon the *a priori* incredibility of such disclosures being ever, under any circumstances, or through any medium, made by God to man. This objection, which is singularly destructive in its bearing, can only be met by showing that the alleged incredibility may be overcome by the force of countervailing evidence—evidence of the existence of sufficient *reasons*, on the part of God, for the bestowment of just such new revelations as those which Swedenborg affirms to have been made through him. But this argument it is not here in place to prosecute. I have already touched upon it.

From the point now reached in regard to the nature and destiny of the soul, I was myself prepared, as I trust my readers are, for some ulterior results growing out of the condition into which man is ushered upon his translation from the body. And, first, it follows, by necessary sequence, that the spiritual world is replenished with the countless myriads of the spirits of deceased men who have once inhabited the earth in terrestrial bodies, and have been successively transferred to their immortal abode. Indeed it is the teaching of Swedenborg, on which I hope on another occasion to enlarge, that *all angels are human spirits from our own or some other earth, and that the ultimate end of the creation of the universe is the formation of a boundless heaven, made up of the unnumbered millions of spirits brought into existence in material bodies, and passing out of them into the spiritual receptacle for which they were designed.** But upon this argument I do not at present

* "How great the multitude of men in all this terrestrial globe is, any one may conclude who knows anything concerning the parts, the regions and kingdoms of this earth. Whoever goes into a calculation, will find that several thousands of men depart thence every day, thus within a year several myriads or millions; and this from

dwelt. My position is, that the spiritual world is replete with the spirits of departed men, and if this be admitted, it will doubtless be conceded that they perpetually exist in intimate, though to us unconscious, conjunction with the spirits of men in the flesh. This arises from the fact that man is a spirit as well as a body, and that as such he is necessarily, as to his interiors, a denizen of the spiritual world, and abiding under the laws that govern a spiritual existence. The doctrine of angelic ministration is very expressly taught in the Scriptures, and the inspired intimations are by no means sparse, that we are incessantly surrounded by, and in close connexion with, a multitude of the heavenly and infernal hosts. The truth on this head is universally admitted in form by the Christian world, and yet that it has comparatively little practical power is undeniable. "Why," says Mr. Clissold, in his Letter to Archbishop Whately, "is the doctrine of Swedenborg in regard to the ministration of angels rejected? Frequently only for the reason that he has treated as matter of fact what with many is mere possibility, it may be probability; that he has imparted a truth and reality to what they profess as their creed. Place much of what he has said about the

the earliest times, since which some thousands of years have elapsed; all of whom after their decease, have come and are constantly coming into the other world, which is called the spiritual world. But how many of these have become and do become angels of heaven, cannot be told. This has been told me, that in ancient times very many became angels, because then men thought more interiorly and more spiritually, and thence were in heavenly affection; but that in the following ages not so many, because man in the process of time became exterior, and began to think more naturally, and thence to be in terrestrial affection. From these things, first, it may be manifest, that the heaven from the inhabitants only of this earth is great. That the heaven of the Lord is immense, may be manifest from this likewise, that all infants, whether they be born within the church or out of it, are adopted by the Lord, and become angels, the number of whom amounts to a fourth or fifth part of the whole human race on earth. How immense the heaven of the Lord is, may also be manifest from this, that all the planets visible to the eye in our solar system are earths, and moreover that there are innumerable ones in the universe, and all full of inhabitants; which have been treated of in a small work concerning those earths, from which I shall adduce the following passage. 'That there are many earths, and men upon them, and spirits and angels thence, is very well known in the other life; for it is granted to every one there, who from the love of truth and thence of use desires it, to speak with spirits of other earths, and thence to be confirmed concerning a plurality of worlds, and to be informed that the human race is not only from one earth, but from innumerable ones. I have spoken several times with spirits of our earth on this subject, and it was said, that any intelligent person may know from many things with which he is acquainted, that there are many earths, and men upon them; for it may be concluded from reason, that such large masses as the planets are, some of which exceed this earth in magnitude, are not empty masses, and created only to be carried and moved round the sun, and shine with their scanty light for one earth, but that their use must be more important than that. He who believes, as every one ought to believe, that the Divine created the universe for no other end than that the human race might exist, and thence heaven,—since the human race is the seminary of heaven,—cannot but believe, that wheresoever there is any earth, there must also be men. Moreover I have spoken with spirits, that it might be believed by man that in the universe there are more earths than one, from this, that the starry heaven is so immense, and the stars there so innumerable; each of which in its place or in its world is a sun, and resembling our sun, but of various magnitudes. He who duly weighs the subject, must conclude, that such an immense whole cannot but be a means to an end, which is the ultimate end of creation; and this end is a heavenly kingdom, in which the Divine may dwell with angels and men. For the visible universe, or the heaven enlightened by so innumerable stars, which are so many suns, is only a means that earths may exist, and men upon them, from whom is the heavenly kingdom. From these things a rational man cannot think otherwise, than that so immense a means to so great an end, was not made for the human race of only one earth: what would this be for the Divine, which is infinite, to which thousands, yea, myriads of earths, and all full of inhabitants, would be little, and scarcely anything?'—*H. & H.* 415-417.

other world in a *speculative* point of view, and many will consider it to be reasonable; present it to them as a matter of fact, and it is absurd; afar off, it is true; at home, it is false."

Now it is certain that this tenet of angelic agency comes home to us with new and imposing power in the disclosures of Swedenborg on this head. According to him, we are every moment in the most vital association with the spirits both of heaven and hell—they are the perpetual prompters of our thoughts—they incessantly work by insinuating influences on our loves—they give force, on the one hand, to the power of temptation, and, on the other, fortify the soul, by hidden influx, to resist temptation—and finally after death every man enters that specific form of heavenly or hellish society with which, by means of his ruling love, he had been tacitly conjoined in life. All this is comprised in Swedenborg's doctrine of the world of spirits—a doctrine growing out of that respecting the true nature of the soul—and I would ask whether it is not sustained by the highest internal evidence of its truth, provided the Scripture informations on this head be conceded as true? In what way do spirits come into communion with us and act upon us, except through our minds? Should not spirit come into contact with spirit rather than with body? If they act upon the physical man, it is only through the mental. The guardianship which ministering spirits exercise towards us is one that puts itself forth by inward monition and impulse, and by warding off the infestations of the spirits of hell, who are continually inciting to evil, and aiming to compass our ruin. Though they are not, according to Swedenborg, able to see directly anything at all in the natural or material world, yet through the medium of our thoughts and affections they become cognizant of our physical condition, and can therefore order their "spiriting" according to our outward as well as inward circumstances.* What valid objection then can be urged against this feature of the scheme? If Swedenborg has not unfolded the true relation between these two great departments of being—the angelic and the human—what is it? In what respects does the ministry of spirits differ from that which he has assigned to them?

Another striking result of the psychological system of Swedenborg, equally inevitable, is that of the *representative scenery of the other life*. The elementary principle of our nature on which this is built has already been adverted to on a previous page. Mental creations form the spiritual substances of the other world, and are necessarily objective. These flow forth from the ruling state of the soul. The interior things of affection and thought, by a law of being, there clothe themselves with representative forms, and these forms become visible not only to the spirits themselves from whom they originate, but to others also. The visual scenery of the other life is therefore the result of the great law of Correspondence, so fully developed in these wondrous disclosures, according to which there is no visible object in the creation but is the image and representative of some spiritual truth, affection, or thought, to which in fact it bears the relation

* I regret that the crude views frequently entertained, even in intelligent quarters, in respect to the genuine purport of Swedenborg's doctrines, render it necessary plainly to disavow, in behalf of his adherents, the claim to a sensible, open, and habitual intercourse with spirits. They acknowledge this in the case of Swedenborg himself; they believe too that it was the original prerogative of man in innocence, and as far as that primitive state may be restored, they doubt not but that he will again come into the enjoyment of it; but the assertion of such intercourse as an ordinary occurrence at this day forms no part of their system.

of an effect to a cause. The human countenance, for instance, *corresponds* with the internal character, because the spiritual essence of man flows into the material organization and moulds and elaborates the external structure into conformity with the internal. In heaven and hell there cannot of course be any natural or material things upon which this law can operate, but it still governs the *appearances* of such objects, which form the furniture of the mind in this world, and which it carries with it in making the transition to another. These are in perfect accordance with the interior moral states of translated spirits. Swedenborg thus speaks on this head:—"Whenever it has been granted me to be in company with angels, the things which are there have been seen by me altogether as those which are in the world; and so perceptibly that I knew no otherwise than that I was in the world, and there in the palace of a king: I also spoke with them, as man with man. Since all things which correspond to the interiors also represent them, therefore they are called *REPRESENTATIVES*; and because they are varied according to the state of the interiors with them, therefore they are called *APPEARANCES*; although the things which appear before the eyes of angels in the heavens, and are perceived by their senses, appear and are perceived as much to the life, as the things which are on the earth appear to man; yea, much more clearly, distinctly, and perceptibly. The appearances which are thence in the heavens, are called *real appearances*, because they exist really. To show what those things are which appear to the angels according to correspondences, I will here adduce one thing for the sake of illustration. To those who are in intelligence, there appear gardens and paradises, full of trees and flowers of every kind: the trees there are planted in the most beautiful order, combined into arbors, through which are arched entrances, and around which are walks; all of such beauty that they cannot be described. Those who are in intelligence also walk there, and gather flowers, and weave garlands, with which they adorn infants. There are also species of trees and flowers there, which are no where seen nor can exist in the world: on the trees also there are fruits, according to the good of love, in which the intelligent are. They see such things because a garden and paradise, and also fruit-trees and flowers, correspond to intelligence and wisdom. That such things are in the heavens, is also known in the earth, but only to those who are in good, and who have not extinguished in themselves the light of heaven by natural light and its fallacies; for they think and say, when speaking of heaven, that such things are there *as the ear hath not heard nor the eye seen.*"—*H. & H.* 174-176.

Such is the view of the celestial scenery presented to us in the revelations we are now considering. It is highly rational—it is profoundly philosophical—in-deed we cannot well conceive that it should be otherwise—and yet it is beyond doubt that with multitudes of minds there is scarcely any matter of graver offence in the alleged disclosures of Swedenborg than these bodyings forth of the objects of the other world. But what conception of heaven and hell can be more impressive than that which involves the principle here affirmed—that every thought pertaining to the moral state of the soul is made to stand out in perpetual revelation to itself and to associated spirits? Whatever be the thought of a spirit, it there assumes a corresponding form, and as spirits know intuitively the meaning of the correspondence, they refer it at once to the thought in which it originates. If a serpent appears in connexion with a bad spirit, it

is known in an instant that his thought is of something sensual, to which a serpent corresponds. On the other hand, if a beautiful bird, a sportive infant, or a gentle lamb appears in proximity with a good spirit, the thought of innocence, or of some pure and lovely affection, is immediately recognized as its suggesting cause. Now the thoughts both in that world and this are always governed by the ruling love. Extinguish a man's love, and his thought perishes as quickly as the light when the candle is blown out in a room at night. But in the other world every man is his ruling love; consequently he cannot help thinking upon the things on which his affection is supremely placed. This love with the wicked is evil and only evil continually. Of necessity, therefore, "the thought of the wicked is sin," and as those thoughts become clothed with visible forms, the man is revealed to others and to himself by these infallible symbols of internal character. What then must be the aspect of hell?—a sensible aggregation of everything that is intrinsically hideous, hateful, and terrific! As the beings that compose hell are made up of every species of fell and direful passion, so whatever representative form is adapted to image forth these infernal promptings, there they all are in fearful vividness, and yet in perpetual change. For as the specific quality of the thought or affection governs the representation, so when the thought changes the scenery changes in accordance with it. This is the fixed law of the spiritual world, from the operation of which there is no escape. Surely this is an awakening view of the doom of a lost soul, and to a right judgment it will not abate the terrors of such a lot that its inheritors have in it an insane delight; for what shall we think of a delight which is thus described: "They are all kept tied and bound by their lusts and phantasies, wherein their very life consists; which life is changed into dreadful torments, such as cannot be described; for the satisfaction of their life consists in being able to punish, torture, and torment each other, which they do by arts wholly unknown in the world, whereby they excite exquisite sensations, and also direful and horrible phantasies, and many more things of a similar kind. The diabolical crew perceive so much pleasure herein, that if it were possible for them to increase and strain pangs and torments to infinity, they would not even then be satisfied, they would still burn with desire to go beyond infinite."

Such, from Swedenborg's report, is hell. Carrying with us the same principle in its opposite application, with what images of ineffable bliss does it people the celestial mansions. As everything fair, and beautiful, and splendid in the creation is correspondent to everything in the soul which is pure, benevolent, and lovely, the angelic heaven is replete with every conceivable and inconceivable form of grace, and beauty, and glory, which stands in representative relation to a hallowed ruling love with its attendant thoughts, and all subject to a never-ending series of changes according to the changes of the internal affections from which they flow.

We have then in this the presentation of the genius of heaven and hell as given in the visions, if you so please to term them, of Emanuel Swedenborg. We perceive at once wherein the portrait differs from that with which the Christian world is mostly familiar. Like everything in the system, it brings us into the sphere of the *subjective*. The *external* of our future lot is the necessary outbirth of the *internal*. Our heaven and hell are essentially our developed characters and consciousness. They are created by the state of our minds and affec-

tions and their visible manifestations grow out of laws which come at once into play when the flesh is laid aside. A man's heaven or hell is not only *in* himself, but *it is* himself, and this self he is forming every day by his love and his life in the world. His moral conduct is continually superinducing upon him the celestial or the infernal form, and by a law too as invariable as that which brings forth the flower and the fruit in conformity with the quality of the seed. By the same law he is also continually storing away in the inner chambers of his spirit the *matériel* of the scenery which shall go to beautify or deform his eternal dwelling-place. It is a view, therefore, of future destiny which strikes down to the lowest depths of our moral and intellectual being. It is a disclosure which speaks with a voice, and proclaims the indispensable, the everlasting necessity of a life moulded to good if we would realize the resulting felicities of the angelic heaven. It is in such a view, and this only, that the moral power of the Christian doctrine of retribution lies. It must be seen to grow out of the very nature of man, and not to be merely appended as an extraneous and arbitrary allotment awaiting the end of his probationary career. So far as merely sensuous elements of locality and corporeal suffering or enjoyment enter into our anticipations, the force of the real sanctions is weakened, because what we may term the *spiritual instinct* will throw them off, and secret infidelity will triumph; and though the man does not precisely know what his future *will* be, yet he is inwardly very sure what it will *not* be, for he has in the midst of all his darkness certain inbred notions of God and his own nature which will not assimilate with the common exhibitions of heaven and hell. Now the disclosures of Swedenborg come in, in this emergency, and seizing hold of these deep interior intuitions, and stripping them of all the fallacies with which an evil love has invested them, arms them with a tremendous power as the echo of eternal conscience in the most secret recesses of the soul. And I would fain ask, what other views of heaven and hell are equal to stemming the torrent of open and latent iniquity which is pouring itself over the earth? Man *must* be brought under the overwhelming might of this conviction of the *necessary* relation between present character and future destiny, or we may dismiss all well-grounded hope of the regeneration of the world.

Whatever may be thought of the intrinsic truth and soundness of the psychological doctrine now exhibited, it must I think, be admitted to set before us one of the most striking problems, in regard to the author, ever presented to the world. The inquiry at once suggests itself, how it has happened that a man born and reared in the bosom of the Protestant Church, and familiarized from his infancy with its doctrines, should have been led to propound a system so utterly and entirely different from anything taught in the theological standards in which he was educated. How came he to be able to emancipate his mind so completely from the traditional dogmas which were current in his age, and from the influence of which it is usually so difficult for one to get free? Admitting that we occasionally meet with minds of rare originality and independence, which venture upon new and untried paths in the pursuit of truth, yet it will generally be found that their results amount to little more than new *modifications* of established ideas. They are still, unconsciously it may be, bound and shackled by the *leading* tenets which they have imbibed and which have wrought themselves into the inmost texture of their opinions. But here is an entirely new

creation, as it were—something as widely remote from any previous theory as it is possible to conceive. This, I say, is a problem that asks solution. However wonderful the phenomena which Swedenborg has professed to make known to the world, he is himself a greater, on any other hypothesis than that which assumes the absolute truth of his illumination and mission. For let it be considered that he comes boldly forth and announces a system of verities founded upon the constituent elements of man's nature. It professes to deal with fundamental principles and to conduct us to the nethermost depths of our mental and moral being, and if it is ever received it must be upon the evidence accruing to it from this source. It challenges all philosophy to put to the test the truth of its psychological averments. Building itself upon the spontaneous intuitions of the reason, it refers every man to the tribunal of his own bosom to determine the truth or the falshood of what it alleges. How absurd would be such an appeal on the part of a man of sense, unless prompted by the most absolute assurance of the truth of his positions, and how infinitely more absurd the supposition, that such ground should be taken by a crazed monomaniac. Is this the manner of enthusiasts and impostors? Are they used to rest their claims on such a basis? Do they refer to and rely upon the internal evidence of their revelations? Do they not require credence on the strength of some outward testimony to the fact of their visions? Mohammed first palms upon his followers the figment of the angel Gabriel's imparting to him the leaves of the "perspicuous book," and then fabricates any doctrine he pleases as of divine authority. The founder of the Mormons proclaims the delivery to him of the golden plates, and then moulds the alleged copy to such a form of religious dogmas as may suit his corrupt purpose. In these and a multitude of similar cases, the mission of the man has first to be established by proof independent of his doctrine, and then the doctrine is received upon the strength of the mission. With Swedenborg all this is reversed. The proof of the mission comes after the proof of the doctrine, and springs out of it. You are not required to believe in the truth of his mission unless you see the evidence of it in the truth of his doctrine; and the field in which this evidence is to be sought is as wide as the intellectual and moral nature of man. It is upon this ground that the system has been actually embraced by multitudes of minds of a high order of thought, and who would be fully authorized to spurn the imputation of being governed by anything else in their conclusion than the legitimate and constraining power of evidence. How, again we ask, is this to be accounted for, if Swedenborg's system is merely a mass of dreamy hallucinations which have only to be looked at to be turned from with contemptuous loathing? Are intelligent men—men of slow and cautious judgment—so easily led to surrender their own sanity to the insanity of another? Is there anything in Swedenborg's incredibilities more incredible than this? Why then is the world so apparently determined to blink a question most eminently deserving of its profound regard? How can it justify the neglect to weigh the merits of a system of developments presenting so many and so powerful claims to attention? The reasons which prompt an intelligent rejection of Swedenborg we desire above all things to see urged, because they would naturally array themselves against those which have led us to the reception of his disclosures. As matters stand, we venture to affirm that in all equity the advantage of moral posture is wholly on our side. We believe because we

have examined; our opponents reject without examination. Is it right, under these circumstances, that the blight of obloquy should rest upon us?

I have thus far disclosed the successive stages of my progress up to a point where I was prepared to welcome the general scheme of doctrines constituting the theology of the New Church. It came commended as a whole by a power of internal evidence which I would neither gainsay nor resist. But there was still one exception. I was compelled to make a reserve on the score of the internal sense of the Word. Even if there was a foundation in truth for the principle in the abstract, I could not perceive the necessity of making so much of it as I saw was continually done in the expositions of Swedenborg and in the writings and preachings of his espousers. My long continued study of the letter and my fixed habits of interpretation greatly indisposed me to a cordial reception of the general principle. The light of conviction, therefore, on this point was very slowly received, and it came at last mainly through the medium of the Memorable Relations—those remarkable developments which lay open so strikingly the spiritual constitution of our being. I was gradually compelled to yield to the evidence of the fact, that there is in all men potentially, and in renewed men actually, an interior faculty or prompting which spontaneously seeks in the Word a sense beyond the mere purport of the letter. I saw that if there is a spiritual nature in man, the development of which brings him into converse with spiritual things, then the real pabulum of his life must be extracted from the *soul* through the *body* of the inspired Word. The foundation principle of the whole matter, as well as its practical working is susceptible of an easy illustration.

Swedenborg remarks, that when man reads the Word and perceives it according to the sense of the letter, or the external sense, the angels attendant upon him and mingling in his thoughts perceive it in the internal or spiritual sense, for all the thought of the angels is spiritual, whereas the thought of man is natural. The natural ideas of man thus pass into spiritual ideas with the angels. Now let us suppose, in order to present the matter in its true light, that a parent puts into the hand of his child Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress, and seats him at his feet to read the narrative aloud. The child is captivated by the story—he follows the Pilgrim with intense interest through all the varieties of his adventures, as if it were a veritable history, not thinking of any deeper meaning couched under the veil of the letter. But turn now from the reading child to the listening parent. How differently does he regard the whole. He does not rest in the letter. He penetrates the allegorical veil. He recognizes the career of the Christian in the travels, and trials, and conflicts of the Pilgrim. He sees a most beautiful array of spiritual truths under the imagery of the journey from the City of Destruction to the Heavenly City. In a word, he takes a spiritual sense from the very same language which conveys to the child only a literal sense.

This then will unfold the genius of Swedenborg's doctrine of the internal sense of the Word. The angels are to man precisely what the parent is to the child; and when that child becomes a man, and in like manner reads the Word, it may be that that same parent, now a disembodied spirit, may be present at the reading, and feed on the interior purport of what is read, just as he did when listening on earth to the story of the Pilgrim as read by his child.

It is no sufficient objection to this, that the view presented makes the spiritual sense to be adapted rather to the reception of angels than to that of men. This is essentially true, and it is only because the angel is really wrapped up in the inner or spiritual man that this man is capable of rising in his understanding of the Word above the plane of the literal sense. The regenerate spirit is an angel of light temporarily imprisoned in clay.

From this I think it can easily be conceived that all my objections to this peculiar feature of the scheme should have been effectually done away; and so in fact they were. Nothing now resists the most assured and cordial adoption of the system as a whole. Upon the most deliberate and careful survey I am unable to discover in it a single point at which it lies open to the assault of a fair logic or a sound exegesis. Relying upon internal evidence for the enforcement of its claims, I am not competent to perceive in what respect it fails in its demands upon my credence. As to that department of the system which relates to Swedenborg's intercourse with the spiritual world—his converse with the angels for twenty-seven years—the question is settled in my own mind by a very summary process. I first determine the intrinsic naked possibility of the fact itself. Does the psychological nature of man admit of its having taken place? But how can I doubt on this head when the Bible is full of testimonies to the fact of prophets and apostles having been admitted to such converse? Still it may be possible in general without being probable in any particular case. The next question then is that of probability in the case of Swedenborg. What *reasons* does he give me for believing that this privilege was accorded to him? Can my calm reflection perceive a sufficient *occasion* for such a disclosure, at such a period, and through such an instrument? To this the answer is, that according to him the revelation in question is connected with the Second Advent of Jesus Christ, not in person, but in power and spirit, or, in other words, in the glory of the spiritual sense of the Word, which is the essential Truth and Divinity of the Word. I examine this point as a pure question of prophecy, and I find myself brought irresistibly to the conclusion, that if such an event is *ever* to occur, it must occur at about this age of the world, the space of forty, fifty, or eighty years making no essential difference in the count of time in regard to an era of such magnitude. If so, I recognize the highest probability of a new influx of light from heaven of precisely the nature of that which shines from Swedenborg's pages; nor can I be at all shaken from the firmness of this conviction by any course of argument which shall refuse to consider the merits of the prophetic position. If the nature of the Second Advent be not what I have now intimated—if it be not now transpiring—I feel emboldened to demand that the world be informed, what *is* its true nature, and what its true epoch. These are questions that cannot always be blinked. The mass of Christians will not always be content with the virtual position of their teachers, that the very central theme of all New Testament prophecy was given for no other end than to be a perpetual puzzle for faith, and therefore of no practical moment to mankind.

But, secondly, as to the instrument; I find no objection to Swedenborg considered in this character. He was confessedly a man of pre-eminent talents and pre-eminent moral worth. If some one was to be selected for the purpose, why

not he? No man has ever lived who was more amply endowed with all the requisites for such a function.*

And then, lastly, when I look at the essential nature and genius of his revelations, I find them replete with internal evidence of truth. They incessantly build themselves upon, and refer themselves to, certain grand principles of physiology, psychology, and general philosophy, in which my clearest reason cordially acquiesces; nor can I conceive the possibility of any other man's reason dissenting from them *when once rightly understood*. But I can too easily conceive of the operation of causes which shall keep men in ignorance of their real character. I affirm, however, that the internal evidence of truth is amply adequate to sustain their pretensions, and this no man can deny who knows not what that evidence is, and this again he cannot know without having examined it. To one who has, and has appreciated its weight, the testimony of external miracles will be of very little account. Miracles in support of a divine revelation can never supersede the necessity of internal evidence. They compel attention—they prove the trust-worthiness of the messenger—but they do not demonstrate the intrinsic truth of the message. This must shine into the soul by its own light.†

Still the perpetual rejoinder to every plea in behalf of Swedenborg's spiritual disclosures is, *the want of evidence*. Multitudes will admit of portions of them that they are very beautiful, and perhaps of most of them, that they are marked by a certain kind of plausible philosophy, but then it is objected, "How can I be assured that they are *true*—that they are not a mass of fictions, speculations,

* "To your interrogation, '*Why from a philosopher I have been chosen to this office?*' I give for answer, to the end that the spiritual knowledge, which is revealed at this day, might be rationally learned, and naturally understood; because spiritual truths answer unto natural ones, inasmuch as these originate and flow from them, and serve as a foundation for the former. That what is spiritual is similar unto, and corresponds with what is human or natural, or belonging to the terrestrial orb, may be seen in the treatise on H. & H. n. 87 to 102, and 103 to 115. I was, on this account, by the Lord, first introduced into the natural sciences, and thus prepared from the year 1710 to 1745, when heaven was opened unto me. Every one is morally educated and spiritually regenerated by the Lord, by being led from what is natural to what is spiritual. Moreover, the Lord has given me a love of spiritual truth, that is to say, not with any view to honor or profit, but merely for the sake of truth itself; for every one who loves truth, merely for the sake of truth, sees it from the Lord, the Lord being the way and the truth. See John xiv. 6. But he who professes the love of truth for the sake of honor or gain, sees truth from his own selfhood, and to see from one's self, is to see falsity. The confirmation of falsehood shuts the church, but a rational confirmation of truth opens it; what man can otherwise comprehend spiritual things, which enter into the understanding? The doctrinal notion received in the Protestant church, viz. that in theological matters, reason should be held captive under obedience to faith, looks up the church; what can open it, but an understanding enlightened by the Lord?"—*Hobart's Life of Swed.* p. 44.

† It is however to be known that the receivers of Swedenborg's doctrines do not refuse to submit his claims to the test of miracles, if converse with the dead, and cognizance of what is transpiring at a given time in a distant part of the world, be conceded to be miraculous. They will pledge themselves to produce well-attested and indisputable evidence of both these kinds of facts in regard to Swedenborg. But they make no account of them as a substratum of their own faith, which rests on vastly higher grounds, and they do not plead them for the conviction of others, because they know that although they cannot be denied, yet they will not be believed *in their true character*. It will be taken for granted that they were capable of a purely natural solution, provided we knew what it was. On the same grounds the miracles of Christ were rejected by the great mass of those who were eye-witnesses of them. There is no greater delusion than to suppose that men yield easily to the evidence of miracles, however genuine and well-authenticated. A much greater miracle is necessary to make them believe that they are miracles. In nothing has Swedenborg shown a deeper insight into human nature, than in what he has said of the non-efficacy of miracles as an evidence of moral truth.

and dreams? What evidence does Swedenborg afford of their truth other than his simple assertion? And can I rest my faith in such a matter on the bare *ipse dixit* of any man? I find no such revelations in the Scriptures, and consequently what a risk of dangerous delusion must any one run who gives his credence to such strange and unsupported relations?"

What shall be said in reply to this? We could deal with the objection if we knew what *would* be admitted as evidence. Will it be said that a person professing to come to us with tidings from the other world, must be clothed with the power of working miracles, in order to make good his claims? But the miracles will no more be believed to be miracles than the asserted facts to be facts without the miracles. The presumption against both as supernatural events is equally strong and invincible. The force of evidence is altogether relative to the moral state of mind of the person to be affected by it. As a general fact, will a man believe anything of this nature which he does not *wish* to believe?—which goes counter to all his previous notions, prejudices, philosophy, faith?—in a word, which involves the admission that *he has been wrong* in many of his most dearly cherished opinions? Yet we are ready to grant that the promptings now adverted to usually operate rather by preventing the access of evidence to the mind, than by resisting it when presented, and that all obstacles to the entrance of the light of truth are intrinsically superable. But it must be by looking the evidence directly in the face, and if that evidence is internal, it must be contemplated as such. No one has a right to demand any other evidence of the truth of Swedenborg's disclosures than that upon which he relies, and which alone he affirms to be adequate to beget belief. To ask what evidence he gives of the reality of his visions other than that which is involved in the character of the visions themselves, is like asking what evidence Euclid gives of the truth of his Geometry, apart from the axioms, postulates, and demonstrations of which it consists. A man says to you as a mathematician, "How am I to be satisfied that Euclid has embodied such an amount of truth as you affirm in his propositions? What evidence of it have I but his word and yours?" Though the objector has never studied the work himself, yet he scruples not to call upon you to make known the evidence of its truth in some other than the only possible way. Is it not obvious, that if he is ever convinced on this head, it must be by the same process by which you were yourself convinced? In the lack of personal study of the science, what would five hundred signs and prodigies from heaven avail to his conviction? They might prove that Euclid was an honest man and worthy of credit, but would they endow his mind with the intelligent perception of the train of reasoning which went to make out the truth of a single proposition?"

I would not intimate by this that the certainty of Swedenborg's revelations is exactly of a mathematical kind, any more than is that of the Gospel history.

* Swedenborg thus writes to a correspondent:—"To your interrogation, *whether there is occasion for any sign that I am sent by the Lord to do what I do?* I answer, that at this day no signs or miracles will be given, because they compel only an external belief, but do not convince the internal. What did the miracles avail in Egypt, or among the Jewish nation, who nevertheless crucified the Lord? So if the Lord was to appear now in the sky, attended by angels and trumpets, it would have no other effect than it had then. The sign given at this day will be an *illustration*, and thence a *knowledge and reception of the truths of the New Church*; some *speaking illustration* of certain persons may also take place."—*Hob. Life of Swed.* p. 44.

But I maintain that there is still a parallel in the two cases, and that the intrinsic truth of both is to be determined in a similar way and on similar principles. It must be by actual study and research. The evidence in regard to Swedenborg is the *result cumulative* of a connected and somewhat extended perusal of the disclosures as a whole. Conviction of their truth cannot, I believe, possibly be produced in any other manner. At any rate, I can say for myself, that I am at this moment utterly unable to conceive that I could ever have yielded my assent to the veritable character of the revelations, if I had not patiently and candidly read them. No second-hand report—no compendious digest—no fragmentary snatches—could at all have sufficed to beget that plenary assurance which has sprung up in my mind in consequence of the actual perusal of the works. A partial view of the subject will invariably be a distorted one. A judgment of the system, in order to be fair and enlightened, must be a judgment pronounced upon it as a whole, and in view of the fundamental principles on which it rests. Our hope of its reception, on a wide scale, is exactly proportioned to our hope of its obtaining a candid hearing; and truth compels us to say, that, as founded on this contingency, our hope of any speedy auspicious results is but slight. The overwhelming power of prejudice stands in the way of anything like justice being done to the sublime and magnificent display of truth embodied in this system of disclosures. The espousal of it involves the admission of a principle to which the universal mind of Christendom seems unanimously and violently opposed, to wit, that it is possible to be as fully assured of truth from other sources as from the letter of inspiration. This is regarded as a virtual disparagement of that revelation which God has given us, and the literal purport of which is to be the ultimate standard of all truth, scientific as well as sacred. It is true indeed that the evidence of astronomical and geological truth has in good measure triumphed over this prejudice, but the battle has yet to be fought on the score of physiology and psychology. The concession has yet to be extorted from the idolaters of the inspired *letter*, that we may positively *know* something of the inner constitution of man's nature, and that this knowledge may properly govern our construction of the sacred text. What possible detriment can accrue to revelation from this admission? Can the truth of nature, rightly understood, be at war with the truth of Scripture, rightly interpreted, if both proceed from the same source? Will not the sense of words inevitably in the end adjust itself to the truth of things, and thus leave the credit of both unimpaired? The members of the New Church have, at any rate, no concern on this score. They hold with equal assurance to the intuitions of their own minds, and to the inspired dicta of the Word. They cannot conceive of any real conflict between them, and they remain unmoved by the charge of elevating the one at the expense of the other. In the mean time they have the consolation of knowing, that they have yielded their faith as the result of the only legitimate process of attaining truth. They have not, because they could not consistently do it, taken up their belief upon hearsay evidence. They have read, weighed, and decided for themselves. Consequently no opposing arguments can have the slightest influence upon their conclusions, coming from those who have not, in a similar manner, gone over the whole ground, and acquainted themselves with the true character and genius of the system, and they would be very glad to be informed of an instance in which any one has faithfully done this—who has truly mastered the body of

doctrines propounded by Swedenborg—and yet has deliberately rejected it. Hundreds, no doubt, who have got hold of shreds and patches of the system, have been ready to cry out upon its absurdities and rhodomontade—its falsities and impieties—its abominations and delusions. But I hesitate not to say that such a verdict is impossible with one who has put himself in possession of the fundamental principles on which it rests. If he does not adopt it, he cannot despise it; and I would respectfully submit whether the view exhibited in the foregoing rapid and imperfect sketch, presents a scheme of doctrine peculiarly calculated to disgust or horrify a serious and reflecting mind. Is there not at least some fair show of reason, and some devout acknowledgment of Scripture, which may justly redeem it from the charge of extravagance, insanity, and grievous heresy? It does indeed interfere very essentially with the foundation of some widely prevalent notions in the Christian world. But *may it not be true notwithstanding?* Is there not at least a *possibility* that Swedenborg may be right and Christendom wrong? Is a general concurrence an absolute criterion of truth? Have there not been epochs in history—in church history—where the mind has suddenly awakened to the perception of great errors long established, deeply rooted, and prescriptively accredited? May it not possibly be so here? Are we entirely sure that the *ne plus ultra* of dogmatic certitude has been reached? Has the reign of error wholly ceased? May not a deeper development of our nature disclose a want of harmony between its elemental principles and the objective beliefs in which it has reposed? We leave it to the decision of Time and Providence. It is the work of the God of Truth to confirm the word of his servants—to bring forth every divine verity from the eclipse of error—and to consume every falsity by the brightness of his coming.

In drawing the present narrative to a close I cannot fail to be aware that the general view advanced of the truth of Swedenborg's revelations may be charged as a one-sided view, and one that omits to give due weight to the objections that are fairly to be urged against them. But what are these objections? Nothing would afford me higher gratification than to have them arrayed, in all their force, against the conclusions to which I have come. This has ever been the difficulty with which the espousers of the system in question have had to contend—that their opponents have refused to state their objections except in the form of such wholesale and sweeping denunciation as might be conveyed in the epithets *incredible, absurd, ridiculous, nonsensical, &c.* To this mode of argumentation it must be confessed to be no easy matter to reply, for, as Paley remarks in regard to Gibbon, "Who can refute a sneer?" In the admission of Swedenborg's claims to a divine illumination we profess to have been governed by the legitimate rules of evidence which in all great matters determine the human mind to belief or disbelief. We perceive that that evidence involves the alleged truth of certain fundamental principles of our nature, which if once established inevitably draw after them the grand results announced in the mass of disclosures. The whole question, in their view, turns upon the truth or falsity of these principles, and as they have been decisive in fixing their own faith they see not why they are not entitled to demand a verdict on this head. Does not every system fairly claim to be judged of on the ground of its *fundamental principles*? Why then should this justice be refused to that of Swedenborg? Though he pleads the prerogative of "visions and revelations of the Lord," yet he asks no man's cre-

dence simply on this score, if he does not at the same time, recognise a rational evidence of the grounds on which the claim is made. Has the claim been met in an equal spirit of fairness? Far from it. The course of opponents has usually been to seize upon some particular feature of the scheme and to hold it up to ridicule and odium, detached from all its relations and dependencies in the grand whole to which it belongs, and in connexion with which alone it can be properly viewed. Against this procedure we enter our earnest protestation. We affirm it to be pre-eminently unjust, ungenerous, unchristian. It is a policy utterly unworthy of pens professing to be guided by a supreme regard to truth. It is a virtual expression of contempt for the understanding of the advocates of these doctrines which they are entirely conscious of not deserving. Is it for a moment to be supposed that they did not feel at the outset the force of the objections founded upon the contrariety of Swedenborg's teachings, on many points, to their previous belief, as sensibly as it is possible for any one else to feel it? Do they not uniformly confess this, together with the long-continued and often agonizing struggles which preceded their surrender of fondly cherished opinions? Yet the strength of the objections finally gave way to the pressure of countervailing evidence, and they strenuously contend that sentence shall in the first instance be passed, not upon the *results*, but upon the *process*, of their convictions. They are ready and anxious to spread before others the *grounds* and *reasons* which have governed their belief, that their soundness or unsoundness may be pronounced upon by the candid and reflecting. They are entitled to the credit of being fully aware of the momentous consequences attached to the adoption of a religious creed which shall permanently mould their characters in this world and shape their destiny in the next. They are no less alive than their fellow-men to the folly of building their most sacred hopes upon the airy basis of dreams and reveries. Nor do they confess to any peculiar incapacity to weigh the evidences of truth upon which a professed revelation from heaven is commended to their acceptance. They are at any rate to their own consciousness determined by *reasons*, and it is by the intrinsic sufficiency or insufficiency of these *reasons* that they would have their decision judged. But alas, how seldom is their demand on this score heeded! It is drowned in the outburst of obloquy and contempt poured forth upon an alleged mass of rhodomontade and vagary which carries its own condemnation on its face. "How," it is asked, "can a rational man, if he believes in the Scriptures, believe in the idle report of celestial conferences such as Swedenborg describes? Where is the evidence of any such miraculous vouchsafement at the present day? And what must be the weakness of the mind that can conceive of any such scenes transacting among spirits in the other world as form the staple of Swedenborg's *memorable* relations—*memorable* only for their tax upon human credulity? How can any one receive them as true, without writing the Scriptures as false? And how will he acquit himself in reconciling their *inconsistencies* with the dictates of common sense?"

All this is very easily said, though not remarkable for any peculiar logical acumen or pertinency of scope to the real question at issue. This question is a question of the intrinsic truth of certain first principles asserted in regard to the constitution of man's nature, and the necessary conditions of his being in another world. The primary point of debate is not whether Swedenborg actu-

ally *saw* and *heard* what he affirms he did in the spirit-world, but whether the things which he states in regard to that world are not true in themselves independent of his seeing and hearing. When the asserted phenomena are fairly presented to the mind, as he has described them, and in connexion with the psychological principles involved, is not the conviction compelled that such is the actual state of things in that world, whether Swedenborg saw it or not? This is the question, and upon this question the receivers of Swedenborg's disclosures, having not a shadow of doubt themselves, are ready to join issue with any form or any amount of dissent. They see in the principles of these revelations, considered in their *leading* features, the eternal truths of God and the universe, and by these truths they feel compelled at all events to abide, with whatever they agree or disagree. The strength of assurance with which they hold them cannot be in the least weakened by any apparent conflict with the letter

* "We have observed, that every one believes that, in the spiritual world, the moral order of things will be different from the outward order which prevails upon earth; but, nevertheless, if we place before him a narrative which embodies these principles, he will, generally speaking, not believe it, for the reason of its presenting to view that in which he professed to believe, which he thought he did believe, but which, when realized, it is seen that he does not; although, had he established in his mind the right distinctions between good and evil, he would have the evidence of his own heart and understanding for the truth of that which was presented to him, and, as such, would give it full credence. Now, in another life, good and truth being separated from the evil and the false, and all angels being thus the form of their own good and truth, and all devils the form of their own evil and false, it follows, that any narrative respecting angels and devils, founded upon this principle, must involve no other than a complete system of morals, and of the laws of our mental constitution. The only difference between a narrative of this kind, and such a system presented separately from the narrative, would be, that the former would treat of principles as embodied in real existence, and the latter would treat of them in the abstract. Now, if certain principles in the abstract be true, they cannot be rendered false by embodying them into action, or by forming them into a dialogue; for even were the persons fictitious, still the principles would be true: at all events, we may contemplate the principles independently of the persons; hence we may contemplate the principles contained in Swedenborg's narratives, independently of the angels or devils in whom they are supposed to be realized; and if, in perusing these narratives, the reader admits the truth of the principles, but denies the reality of the persons, he is at liberty to do so; though I see not what he will gain by it, as the persons are only the personations of the principles. On the other hand, if any one denies the principles, of course he rejects the narrative altogether; and in this case, let him not think that he is only denying the existence of imaginary persons, or only rejecting visions as visions; far from it,—he is rejecting principles,—principles involving the vital distinctions between light and darkness, good and evil, holiness and sin, heaven and hell. He must not, therefore, deceive himself with the idea that, in this case, he is only repudiating the dreams of some visionary, who is demanding assent without adequate evidence; he is rejecting that which affects the foundation of all belief in another world, all belief in reward for the righteous, and punishments for the wicked. For what, in the works of Swedenborg, is heaven shown to be? It results, as we are told, from the Divine Human of the Lord, whence also results the form of heaven; and as this Divine Human is Divine goodness and truth, so has every angel his locality in the body of heaven, according to his appropriation of these principles. Heaven, therefore, is only the realization of these principles in the creature, as hell is their negation and perversion; angels being the personations of heavenly principles, and devils of such as are infernal. To reject, therefore, Swedenborg's narratives of heaven and hell, is to reject not persons merely, but principles,—the essential principles of good and evil;—yea, the very Divine Human of the Lord Himself. Suppose Newton, in presenting his *Principia* to the world, declared that the truths it contains were revealed to him by spirits; should we be justified in rejecting the work because we disbelieved in the source from which it was declared the work had proceeded? Surely, we should let the principles it contains stand or fall by their own merits; at all events, if we rejected the principles because we disbelieved in the persons as their alleged authors, is it not plain that we should be rejecting the very laws of nature?"—*Chissold's Letter*, p. 157.

of Holy Writ, for they know it to be impossible that there should be any *real* conflict between them and the *true sense* of the inspired record. Their position in this respect is precisely that of the devout astronomer and geologist. They know that the results of their science are true, and they know equally well that the Scriptures are true also, and that God sees, if they do not, the mode in which these two departments of truth perfectly harmonize. The soundness of the scientific inductions will be very apt to be denied by those who have not acquainted themselves with the facts on which they rest, and at the same time are very jealous of the honor intact of revelation, but their pious remonstrances avail nothing with those who are well aware of the ground on which they stand. Their reply is "Weigh the evidence in its length and breadth and then see if you can resist the conclusions, the *letter* of Scripture to the contrary notwithstanding. Judge too if it be possible for the truth of Scripture to contradict the truth of science."

I venture then to reaffirm the truth *per se* of the fundamental principles involved in Swedenborg's disclosures of the other life and of the connexion that subsists between the natural and the spiritual world. It is truth attested by its own evidence and by which the reason must inevitably abide, even though the admission be made (which, however, it is not), that errors may be detected in certain minor items of the scheme. Truth is truth, be it related to whatever errors it may, and all truth is equally authoritative upon all minds. It is the concern of one man as much as of another, and, if the *principles* of Swedenborg's revelations are stamped with this character, it is vain for his professed opponents to think to shift from themselves to his advocates the responsibility of defending or explaining them, or of showing how their consistency with other truths is to be established. They are indeed willing to assume their part in the performance of this task, but they will not consent that it shall be deemed to pertain to them exclusively. They recognize no obligation of this nature which does not rest upon the whole world as truly as it does upon them. The simple question is that of the abstract and absolute truth of the principles laid down by him, and which take hold of the elemental properties of our being. If these are false, let it be shown, and let them be arrayed in contrast with those which their opponents maintain to be true. We shall thus have a definite and tangible point of debate. Mere denials and denunciations—mere *ad invidiam* charges and hypercritical censures—avail nothing. We call for argument and not invective. We refuse to be put off by the citation of what will be deemed startling or ludicrous paragraphs, when we submit to the tribunal of reason the question whether the soul instead of the body is not the true seat and subject of sensation—whether the soul does not elaborate the body, and give it its own form by correspondence—whether the soul does not live in every part of the body and at death go forth possessed of all the powers and faculties, which distinguished it during its sojourn in the body—whether accordingly it does not see, hear, touch, and smell as truly in the other life as in this—and finally whether, if so, spirits do not enjoy precisely that kind of intercourse with each and with us, which Swedenborg so minutely describes? We would fain be resolved whether if the fundamental axioms of the psychology be admitted, all that Swedenborg states of the actual condition of spirits, and of the laws of their action upon each other and upon us, do not follow by necessary sequence. Has not every man, for in-

stance, a ruling love? Is not that love his life? And will not his future destiny be the complete development of his interior life as good or evil? Are not Will and Understanding, or Affection and Intellect, his distinguishing attributes? And does not a good Affection always tend to conjoin itself with Truth, and an evil Affection with Falsehood? Will this law cease to operate in the other life? Must not heaven be the perfect union of Goodness with its kindred Truth, and hell the consummated alliance of Evil with its kindred False? Are men, men, and women, women, i. e., are they male and female, from the soul as well as the body? Do they enter the other world, a man a male spirit, and a woman, a female spirit? Does not then the distinction of sex hold in that world as truly as in this? And if so, is it easy to conceive that those who had been married partners here, if *internally* and *cordially* united, should not sustain to each other a similar spiritual relation there? And if the prospect of this is apparently precluded by our Saviour's declaration, that "in heaven they neither marry nor are given in marriage," should we not rather conclude that the purport of the saying is that there are no *such* marriages in heaven as were then in the gross and carnal conceptions of the Sadducees, but not conveying the idea that pure spiritual marriages entered into on earth were not perpetuated in heaven?

These are all questions growing directly out of the grand positions of Swedenborg, relative to the interior constitution of man, and how are they met by the plea that he relates the queerest kinds of visions, and says that Luther, and Melancthon, and Calvin are in a very different state in the other world from what Christendom has usually believed? Whether this be so or not, we still recur to the above questions and claim that a sentence of yea or nay shall be passed upon them. They are entirely independent of the truth or falsehood of any actual visioned occurrences in the world of spirits, and it is merely throwing dust in our eyes to offset our just demands for decision by any such invidious presentations. We are not moved by them so long as they do not nullify the evidence of truth in regard to other particulars, and especially as the evidence of what is credible reflects itself over upon that which is comparatively incredible, giving it strong collateral probability. Certain it is that he who receives any one part of Swedenborg's disclosures relative to the other life finds less and less resistance to the admission of every other part, for, conceding the state into which he affirms himself brought, one can easily grant that he may have learned far more truth than we could naturally have anticipated, and that we are not in possession of adequate grounds for calling in question the accuracy of his reports.

Our reply, therefore, to all the common objections urged against the alleged trifling, grotesque, and confounding character of many of the details of the visions is, that we do not know enough of the realities of the spirit-life positively to deny the occurrence of just such objects and scenes as enter into his relations. If we were fully masters of the interior laws of spiritual being, we might form a very different estimate of many of these staggering items in his descriptions, and I think I may say that, as a matter of fact, whatever Swedenborg has said becomes more and more rationally credible the more deeply we become conversant with the philosophy of the spiritual world as developed in his writings. Such at least has been my own experience, nor do I allow myself to have been so far blinded by partisan influences as to be unable to determine how much of my conviction rests upon legitimate evidence, and how much is to be resolved

into implicit trust in the dicta of an illuminated oracle. At any rate, I feel abundantly authorized to fall back upon the position, that what is certain to my intellectual perception cannot be made void by what is uncertain. I am certain that undeniable truth lies at the foundation of all these impressive unveilings of the world of spirits, and planted upon the rock of assurance in this respect, I feel myself totally undisturbed by the force of objections which do not reach the substratum of my faith.

But more serious consideration, it may be said, is due to the fact that Swedenborg invades the sanctity and integrity of the Sacred Canon, and by rejecting a portion of the Scriptures virtually annihilates the authority of the whole. This is a grave charge, representing probably a wide-spread opinion, and the point involved deserves to be set in a clear light. I remark then, in the first place, that *Swedenborg in fact rejects nothing from the canon*. He takes the Bible as he finds it, and as he finds it he leaves it, so far as the matter of *rejection* is concerned. We ask for the production of a single line from his writings indicating a sentence of *exclusion* of any book of the Scriptures from the place which it occupies. He often quotes from them indiscriminately whatever is suitable to the subject-matter in hand, and his general tone in regard to the *whole* canon is that of high respect. At the same time it is true that he does affirm a very broad line of distinction between different portions of the sacred volume, on the score of *plenary inspiration*. He claims a vastly higher character, in this respect, for certain books, both in the Old Testament and the New, than he does for others. In the Old Testament he recognizes a peculiar sanctity in the portions designated by our Lord "the Law, the Psalms, and the Prophets," which by being thus distinctly referred to are stamped with the seal of the highest authority. The books constituting this threefold division are, according to him, the five books of Moses, Joshua, Judges, 1 and 2 Samuel, 1 and 2 Kings, the Psalms, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi. These he declares to be written under a higher degree of inspiration than the remaining books, and to contain an internal spiritual sense in which consists their essential sanctity and divinity, and from which they constitute what is emphatically to be denominated *The Word* of the Old Testament. The remainder, which is composed of the books of Ruth, 1 and 2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, Job, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and the Song of Solomon, do not possess this sense, or but in a very limited degree, and therefore are assigned to a secondary rank, as compared with the preceding. Now it is certain that these very books (including also Daniel and Lamentations, but without sufficient reason) are thrown together *at the end* of the Hebrew canon, in which the collocation of the books is entirely different from ours. This arrangement, the Jews affirm, is made on the ground of a lower degree of sanctity pertaining to this portion of them than to the others, so that Swedenborg is at any rate sustained in his sentence by the voice of the Jewish Church.* These books are entitled collectively the *Hagiographa*, and it

* Prof. Stuart freely admits that the Jewish writers did recognize a distinction in the Sacred Books, founded upon the different degrees of inspiration under which they were penned, although he peremptorily decides that "the whole affair is a mere Rabbinical conceit, hatched out during the dark ages of Rabbinism that preceded the composition of the Babylonish Talmud." The fact, however, he states as follows: "The Talmudic (i. e. the present Hebrew,) division of the sacred books depends on some conceits

is usually supposed that the title *Psalms*, as used by our Saviour, Luke xxiv. 44, includes the whole of this division, but there is no adequate evidence that it was employed in this latitude at that time, or in other words that the title above mentioned included any more than the book so denominated; consequently the triplicate division of "the Law of Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms," is taken in the New Church as comprising the totality of the books which constitute the Old Testament *Word*. This designation, however, implies a character so immeasurably elevated above that which is ordinarily assigned to *any* of the canonical writings, that the rest of them may well be left in undisturbed possession of that *modicum* of inspiration which is usually claimed for them.

In the New Testament Swedenborg informs us that this character of essential sanctity or divinity pertains to the four Gospels and the Apocalypse, but not to the Acts of the Apostles and the Epistles. The former, like the Word of the Old Testament, were dictated by the inspiring power which took possession of the writers *for that time only*.* The Acts and the Epistles, on the other hand, were written under that general but more lax kind of inspiration which was inseparable from the persons of the writers, and which may therefore properly be termed *personal*, while the other is denominated *plenary*, implying the dictation of the very words and phrases employed, all of which contain a higher internal sense, couched under the sense of the letter, and to be interpreted on the principle of Correspondence.

Let us see then how far this view of the subject is justly liable to the charge of derogating in any measure from the true and essential character of the Scriptures. According to the prevalent view of inspiration, the sacred books were

about the different *gradations* of inspiration, which are not only incapable of any satisfactory proof, but are in themselves quite improbable. The story of the Jewish doctors is, that the books of Moses take the precedence above all others, because God spake with him mouth to mouth; that the Prophets who came after him, were such as, whether sleeping or waking when they received revelations, were deprived of all the use of their senses, and were spoken to by a voice, and saw prophetic visions in ecstasy; that the third and lowest class of the sacred writers were those, who, preserving the use of their senses, spake like other men, and yet in such a way that, although not favored with dreams, or visions in ecstasy, they still perceived a divine influence resting upon them, at whose suggestion they spoke or wrote what they made public. Of this last class, according to the Rabbins, were the authors of the Kethubim." He says, however, "I am far enough from asserting that the contents of any and every book of the Old Testament are all of equal interest and importance. This is not and cannot be the case." The grounds of the Hebrew classification, to wit, different degrees of inspiration, demand a larger concession than this, and Prof. S. makes it in the following sentence. "Still it is difficult, after admitting their grounds of classifying the Scriptures, to avoid the idea of a *difference in the authority of each class, and in the credence due to each*." As, however, the fact is that the Jews acknowledged different degrees of the divine *affatus* as the ground of this threefold division of their Scriptures, we venture to believe that there was actually a reason for it, as Swedenborg asserts, though it is still possible that Jewish fancies and caprices may have been engrafted upon the truth that lay at the foundation of the whole matter. Hengstenberg is also clearly of this opinion. His idea of the extatic state of the prophets in the reception of their messages strikes us as extremely rational and sound, and yet Prof. S. is evidently most inveterately opposed to it. His own views appear to us utterly destructive of all correct ideas of inspiration.

* "In fact, the lowest gradation of inspiration, ascribed by the Rabbies to the authors of the Kethubim, (Hagiographa,) is as high as Christianity demands, or, one may say, even permits us to ascribe to men. No man, not even Moses or Isaiah, was uniformly and always inspired. Of all God's messengers, only one received the gift of the Spirit without measure; and he was the only one who never erred and never sinned. Others were inspired for a particular purpose, and (it may be) remained so, until that purpose was accomplished. Then they returned to their usual state."—Prof. Stuart on the *O. T. Canon*, p 271.

all of them written by men who were under a general control and superintendence of the Holy Spirit, which secured the infallibility of their teaching, and this *infallibility* constitutes the highest attribute of the writings originating from this source. They are in this respect all marked by the same character, and all placed upon the same level. But Swedenborg, in behalf of the Divine Word, claims something unspeakably higher than mere *infallibility*. He declares that the Word is not only *from* the Lord, but *is* the Lord, just as any written or spoken communication of a man *is a form of the man himself*. A man's vocal speech is an emanation from the man himself; he is essentially *in* his utterance; and the case is not altered by its being embodied in written language. A letter addressed by one person to another, is as truly a going forth of his spirit, in the form of words, as if the communication were made by spirit coming in contact with spirit in the spiritual world. The Divine Word is the divine voice speaking to man, and the Divine voice is as much a form of the Divine being as a man's voice is a form of his being. But the human voice is effected by the medium of the undulations of the atmosphere, which of course cannot hold in respect to the Deity. The ærial sound however, in man's case, is nothing more than a vehicle for conveying the thought and affection of the speaker's mind, and cannot be needed for the communication of spirits disembodied. They then communicate by impressing *themselves* upon each other. Now God is a spirit, and in our present corporeal state he comes into communion with our spirits through the medium of written speech, but this speech is *Himself*, in his essential Love and Truth, and whatever is in Himself is in his speech, that is, in his Word, just as Swedenborg remarks in a passage already quoted, that "every thought, speech, and writing derives its essence and life from him who thinks, speaks, and writes, the whole man with his quality being in those things, but in the Word is the Lord alone." The Word of God therefore is the *living* Divine Truth, and is at any one moment just as really the *present* utterance, expression, or emanation of the Divine Being, as when flowing into the minds of the sacred penmen by whom it was indited, as they were *moved* (*φερομενοι*, *acted, borne or carried away*) by the Holy Ghost. But if the Divine Word *is* the Divine Lord, it is impossible to conceive that his inmost affections and thoughts—in a word, his essential Divinity—should not be in it, and consequently that there should not be a depth of import entirely transcending the sense of the outward letter.†

* "Every man is not a man from his face and body, but from the good of his love and the truths of his wisdom; and whereas a man is a man from these principles, every man likewise is his own truth and his own good, or his own love and his own wisdom, and without these he is not a man. But the Lord is good itself and truth itself, or, what is the same thing, love itself and wisdom itself; and these are the Word, which 'in the beginning was with God, and was God, and which was made flesh.'"—*Div. Prov.* 172.

† "Who," says Mr. Noble, "does not see, that the difference between compositions that are really the Word of God and the compositions of men, must be as great, as between the works of God and the works of men? And wherein does the latter difference most remarkably consist? Is it not in the interior organization which the works of God possess, beyond what appears in their outward form? When we look at a picture or a statue, which are among the most exquisite productions of human ingenuity, after we have seen the surface, we have seen the whole: and although there are pieces of curious mechanism which contain a complication of parts within their outside case, this only carries us one step farther: when we look at any of the parts, we see the whole;—the interior texture of the material of which they are composed not being the work of the human artist, but of the Divine Creator. Whereas, when we look at any of the works of his omnipotent hand, beautiful and exact as they are in their outward

We have thus far spoken in general terms of an internal or spiritual sense in the Word, without reference to that more specific *threefold* aspect which Swedenborg ascribes to it. We will first present in Swedenborg's own words the fundamental ground on which the position rests. "From the Lord proceed these principles, the celestial, the spiritual, and the natural, one after another. Whatsoever proceeds from his divine love is called celestial, and is divine good; whatsoever proceeds from his divine wisdom is called spiritual, and is divine truth: the natural partakes of both, and is their complex in ultimates. The angels of the celestial kingdom, who compose the third or highest heaven, are in that divine principle which proceeds from the Lord that is called celestial, for they are in the good of love from the Lord; the angels of the Lord's spiritual kingdom, who compose the second or middle heaven, are in that divine principle which proceeds from the Lord that is called spiritual, for they are in the truths of wisdom from the Lord: but men, who compose the Lord's church on earth, are in the divine-natural, which also proceeds from the Lord. Hence it follows, that the divine principle proceeding from the Lord, in its progress to its ultimates, descends through three degrees, and is termed celestial, spiritual, and natural. The divine principle which proceeds from the Lord and descends to men, descends through those three degrees, and when it has descended, it contains those three degrees in itself. Such is the nature of every divine principle proceeding from the Lord; wherefore, when it is in its last degree, it is in its fulness. Such is the nature and quality of the Word; in its last sense it is natural, in its interior sense it is spiritual, and in its inmost sense it is celestial; and

form; still the most beautiful and wonderful parts of them are within. Some of these hidden wonders are discoverable to the diligent inquirer by means of dissections and by the aid of glasses: but when the most ingenious investigator has extended his researches into the interior construction of any natural production to the utmost limits that human means can conduct him, he must, if he is a wise man, be convinced, that what he has thus discovered, is, after all, but general and superficial, compared with the greater wonders which still lie concealed within. The most expert anatomist never, for instance, reached the seat of the soul,—still less the principle of consciousness and life of which the soul itself is merely the organ; all which, and even the material forms which are their first envelopes, still lie beyond the most subtle forms that the gross observation of the senses can discover. The farther, however, the observation of the senses can extend, the greater are the wonders which appear. Just so it is with the Word of God: and so it must be, if it has in reality God for its Author."—*Plen. Insp.* p. 63.

"From all that has been advanced it may be seen, that to suppose the literal sense of the Word of God, (upon the assumption that it is rightly so named,) to be all that it contains, because nothing more is obvious to a superficial inspection, is just as reasonable as to affirm, that the human body consists of nothing but skin, because this is all that meets the unassisted eye: but as the researches of anatomists have assured us, that within the skin which covers our frame there are innumerable forms of use and beauty, each of which consists again of innumerable vessels and fibres; whilst, after science has carried her discoveries to the utmost, the principle that imparts life to the whole still eludes the search: so the letter of the Holy Word, which may be regarded as its skin, includes within it innumerable spiritual truths, adapted in some measure to the apprehension of spiritually minded men, but more completely to the intellects of purely spiritual beings; whilst the Essential Divine Wisdom which gives life to the whole, is beyond the comprehension of the highest finite intelligence, and can only be known to its Infinite Original. And such must be the character of the *whole* of the Word of God,—as well of those passages which afford a clear, instructive sense in the letter, as of those which do not: for the Word of God, to be truly so, must be like itself throughout, and must everywhere be composed upon one uniform principle. Every mind that reflects deeply upon the subject, will, I am persuaded, see, that to deny the Holy Word, to possess such contents as we have described, is equivalent to denying it to have God for its author. It makes it nothing more than the word of men;—of men pious, perhaps, and enlightened, but still finite and fallible."—*Id.* 68.

in each sense it is divine. That the Word is of such a nature and quality, does not appear in the sense of the letter, which is natural, by reason that man has heretofore been altogether unacquainted with the state of the heavens, and consequently with the nature of the spiritual principle, and the celestial, and of course with the distinction between them and the natural principle."—*N. J. Doct. of Sacred Scripture*, 6.

For a very clear and satisfactory expansion of the idea embodied in this paragraph, we cite the following extract from the letter of the Rev. J. Clowes to the editors of the London Christian Observer, in reply to an attack in that work on his pamphlet entitled "A few plain Answers to the Question, Why do you receive the Testimony of Baron Swedenborg?"

"The term *celestial*, according to Baron Swedenborg's definition of it, involves in it, and therefore expresses, whatsoever hath relation to *heavenly love and charity*, consequently whatsoever hath relation to the *human will*, when under the influence of heavenly love and charity. The term *spiritual* again, according to Baron Swedenborg, involves in it, and therefore expresses whatsoever hath relation to *heavenly truth or knowledge*, consequently whatsoever hath relation to the *human understanding*, when under the influence of heavenly truth and knowledge. The term *literal or natural* again, when applied to the Sacred Scriptures, involves in it, according to the ideas of Baron Swedenborg, all that *external language, expression, and history*, necessary for the manifestation and conveyance of the Divine Love and Wisdom to the human will and understanding.

"Nothing can be conceived more plain and simple than the above distinctions between what is *celestial, spiritual*, and *literal or natural*, as applied to the distinct senses of the Word of God; nothing also more agreeable to the whole testimony of that Word, which is continually discriminating between the faculties of *love, of knowledge*, and of their *expression*, consequently between the qualities and characters here adverted to. And yet nothing else is wanting, but the apprehension of these distinctions, to enable any candid reader to discern clearly what Baron Swedenborg means by his *celestial, spiritual*, and *literal or natural* senses of the Sacred Scriptures, and to see further that all those three senses must needs co-exist, or be combined together, in the Divine Speech or Word of the MOST HIGH GOD.

"For what shall we say is the Divine Speech or Word of the MOST HIGH GOD, and what are we to suppose its sacred contents to be? When the GREAT and HOLY GOD utters His voice, it must surely be with a *Divine Purpose*; and a Divine Purpose must as certainly involve in it a *Divine Intelligence*; and a Divine purpose and intelligence, when expressed in language, and thus accommodated to human apprehension, must needs with equal certainty imply a *literal or historical meaning*, adapted to the conveyance of that Purpose and to the discovery of that Intelligence to the wills and understandings of men. For as when a wise and good man speaks, his speech must needs consist of these three distinct parts or principles, viz. *intention, thought, and expression*, the last of which must of necessity contain and convey the two former; how much more is it to be expected that the case will be the same with the Word or Speech of the MOST HIGH GOD! In this Divine Word or speech, therefore, we must needs suppose a Divine *Intention, Thought, and Expression* to render it complete, since if any of the three be wanting, it must be proportionably defective. But a Divine Intention

implies a *Divine Love*, since it is impossible to conceive that the intention of God can be grounded in any other principle but the purest love and mercy in regard to man: a Divine Thought also implies a *Divine Wisdom*, since we are compelled to allow that every thought of the Most High must needs be grounded in the purest wisdom: and lastly a Divine Expression implies a *Divine Letter or Language*, without which we are utterly at a loss to conceive how the Divine Love and Wisdom can express themselves, so as to be communicable to man.

"Behold here then the manifest origin of the three distinct senses of the Sacred Scriptures, the *celestial*, the *spiritual*, the *literal or natural*, spoken of by Baron Swedenborg, and how the Word of God must of necessity be incomplete and imperfect, unless all those three senses are combined together in it! For the *celestial* sense, according to Baron Swedenborg, involves in it whatsoever relates to the *Divine Love*, and whatsoever has a tendency to excite that love in the *will* and *affections* of the devout reader: the *spiritual* sense again involves in it whatsoever relates to the *Divine Wisdom*, and whatsoever is communicative of that Wisdom to the reader's *understanding* and *thought*: and lastly, the *natural or literal* sense involves in it whatsoever relates to the *expression* of the Divine Love and Wisdom, and is best adapted to convey those heavenly principles to the reader's mind, and to impress them on his life. The Word of God is thus wonderfully adapted to every part and principle of the constitution of that being to whom it is addressed, and for whose use it is intended, because that being also consists of three distinct parts or principles, which together constitute the whole of his life, viz. a *will*, an *understanding*, and an *operation*, or a *celestial*, a *spiritual*, and a *natural* part or principle. If then the Word of God had not also consisted of the same distinct parts or principles, it could never have been so accommodated to man, as to produce in him the saving effects it was intended to do, consequently it would have been, in regard to those effects, imperfect and incomplete."—*Plain Answer*, p. 41.

Such then, according to the doctrines in question, is the true nature and character of the Divine Word, properly so termed. It will be seen that, like everything else in the system, the matter refers itself to the grand principles of psychology involved in his revelations. If the Divine and the human constitution be such as here affirmed, what more inevitable than that the genius of the inspired Word must also be such as Swedenborg maintains?

We recur then again to the question, how far the view now suggested is open to the charge of lowering, disparaging, degrading any portion of the sacred volume. Swedenborg finds that in the estimate of the mass of the Christian world a certain character of inspiration, *which pertains in equal measure to the whole*, is claimed for the contents of this book. This character he allows in regard to some of these writings, while he affirms an incomparably higher character in regard to others. That is to say, he concedes to the Epistles, for instance, the ultimatum of inspiration and authority which is, by the general voice, ascribed to the *whole* New Testament writings. But for the Gospels and the Apocalypse he claims a character of *absolute divinity*. Now I would ask if this is doing injury to the Epistles to leave them in the enjoyment of precisely that degree of respect and reverence which they possessed before? Is the *elevation* of one

* As to the intrinsic character and value of the Apostolic writings, it will be seen by the following letter from Swedenborg to Dr. Beyer that he speaks in no *very* disparaging

portion of the Scriptures immensely above the common standard a *depression* of another below it? Much more, is it a *rejection* of the other portion from its place in the Canon? Yet Swedenborg has given no other ground for the charge brought against him of vilifying and weakening the credit of the inspired books. How has he done this? You affirm that the Epistles of Paul are an *inspired* and *infallible* code of truths and doctrines imparted to the first Christian churches, and this is the highest character you claim for them. Granted. But I affirm of the Gospels that they are more than this—that they are the Word—the essential Divinity of the Lord himself, as above explained. Do I, in this assertion, detract aught from your claim? Am I to be accused of *rejecting* the Epistles? Where is the justice of such a sentence? I have no debate with you as to what you maintain in respect to the writings of Paul or Peter. If there is any debate it must be as to what I contend for in relation to the writings of the four Evangelists. You may deny this as a matter of abstract truth, but you cannot charge me with offering disparagement to your views of inspiration. I repeat then that Swedenborg by *raising* one portion of the scriptures does not absolutely *lower* another, though he may be said to do so relatively, just as a person by elevating

ing terms respecting them. "With regard to the writings of St. Paul, and the other apostles, I have not given them a place in my *Arcana Cælestia*, because they are dogmatic writings merely, and not written in the style of the Word, as are those of the Prophets, of David, of the Evangelists, and Revelation of St. John.

"The style of the Word consists throughout in *correspondences*, and thence effects an immediate communication with heaven; but the style of these dogmatic writings is quite different, having, indeed, communication with heaven, but only mediate or indirectly.

"The reason why the apostles wrote in this style, was, that the New Christian Church was then to begin through them; consequently, the same style as is used in the Word would not have been proper for such doctrinal tenets, which required plain and simple language, suited to the capacities of all readers.

"Nevertheless, the writings of the apostles are very good books for the church, inasmuch as they insist on the doctrine of charity and faith thence derived as strongly as the Lord Himself hath done in the Gospels, and in the Revelation of St. John, as will appear evidently to any one who studies these writings with attention.

"In the *Apocalypse Revealed*, n. 417, I have proved that the words of Paul, in Romans iii. 28, are quite misunderstood; and thus the doctrine of justification by faith alone, which at present constitutes the theology of the reformed churches, is built on an entirely false foundation."—*Hob. Life of Swed.* p. 134.

"The adherents of Swedenborg will, doubtless, be very ready to accede to the sentiments of Mr. Noble in regard to the following estimate of the Epistles. "When they (the apostles) acted as writers, recording Christianity for the instruction of the church in all succeeding times, I apprehend, that they were under the guidance of the Spirit as to the subject of which they treated: that they wrote under his influence and direction; that they were preserved from all error and mistake in the religious sentiments they expressed; and that, if anything were inserted in their writings, not contained in that complete knowledge of Christianity of which they were previously possessed, (as prophecies for instance,) this was immediately communicated to them by revelation from the Spirit. But with respect to the choice of words, I know not but they might be left,"—says our author, who might safely have omitted the words of hesitation,—“to the free and rational exercise of their own minds, to express themselves in the manner that was natural and familiar to them, while at the same time they were preserved from error in the ideas they conveyed.” “All this is true,” says Mr. Noble, “but it is greatly to be lamented, that what is true of a part of the writings contained in the Bible,—of the hagiographical compositions, only,—should inadvertently have been extended to the whole. As it is obvious to every student and believer of the Bible that some of its writers were under the influence of a secondary and personal inspiration, it has been concluded that this was the case with them all: and it is evident that writings thus produced can have none but the plain grammatical sense; whilst the radical difference between compositions of this character and those which are the result of an immediate divine *affatus* has been overlooked; many have at length concluded, that there is no real sense but the grammatical one throughout the Word of God.”

one of two objects that are in juxtaposition *appears* to depress the other. The only possible ground of complaint in the case is that any distinction whatever should be made in regard to the two classes of writings—that they should not both be elevated alike.* But will the elevation in regard to *either* be admitted in the sense which Swedenborg maintains? If not, where again I ask, is the injustice done to the popular estimate? Is it a righteous ground of censure against any man that he exalts certain parts of the Scriptures to a degree of importance, dignity, and sanctity that had not previously been accorded to them? Shall he be accused of undervaluing the writings of the apostles by not admitting in them a spiritual sense, and again rebuked for attaching *too much* importance to other books by finding in them such a sense? Swedenborg affirms that even those historical records in which Christians usually recognize only remarkable events directed or controlled by the Divine Providence, are replete with arcana relating to the Lord, to heaven and the church, and which have the most momentous bearing on the regeneration of the spiritual man. Is this a crime? By thus asserting and proving that treasures of angelic wisdom are stored up in every part of the Word is he not entitled to be hailed as a friend, instead of being dreaded as an enemy, or reviled as an impostor? Yet certain it is that men who seem to value the Christian name, and profess to reverence the sacred pages, evince a degree of virulence against the writings of this instructed scribe due only to the most bitter assaults of infidels and atheists upon the Christian's faith. This is surely a strange inversion of all equitable judgment. It is meting out a measure for which we are at a loss to find any justifying grounds. It is awarding a sentence which we are confident will be reversed by the decision of a more candid tribunal in a coming day.

A word upon the *practical* bearings of the system, and I have done. The impression, I believe, is somewhat widely prevalent that the scheme of doctrines propounded by Swedenborg is signally lacking in the elements of moral power. From the fact that it professes to develope the spiritual world, and that it deals so largely with supersensual objects, the idea has taken root that it sets before us a *religion of the fancy*—that its piety is merely a *species of spiritual romancing*—that it appeals more to an *excited imagination* than to *sober reason*—that it ministers too much to *vain curiosity* and too little to *sound wisdom*—that its legitimate product is *persuasion* rather than *faith*—and that it is not a genial soil for the growth of the staid, stern, and hardy virtues of self-denial, patience, and never-ceasing devotion to the higher interests of our fellow-men. All this, if true, would indeed constitute a weight of objection against the system which it would be diffi-

* It may, perhaps, be replied to this, that my vein of argument is unfair, inasmuch as Swedenborg's denial that certain books belong to the *Word of God* is a virtual rejection of them from the *Canon*, since the *Word of God* and the *Canonical Books* have always been regarded, by common consent, as equivalent appellations. The truth of this equivalency, however, is the very point in dispute. Swedenborg has a perfect right to assume and show, if he can, that the two things are not the same, and this we believe he has done by adducing sufficient evidence to prove that he was authorized to draw the line of demarcation. A new question indeed results as to the light in which those books are to be viewed that do not pertain to the *Word of God* strictly so termed. This again brings up the grand question as to the *nature of inspiration viewed in connexion with the psychological state of the writers, and how far this is susceptible of degrees*—a question which is next to never fairly met in the discussions of theologians on this subject. Meantime we still hold to our position, that Swedenborg's high claim in regard to certain books does not disturb the estimate, which is popularly formed of the others.

cult to countervail even by the most imposing array of testimonies in its favor. But I do not admit its truth. Waving all appeal to experience or to the *lives* of its disciples, I see nothing in the genius of the system which can justly expose it to the charge of deficiency on the score of ethical influence of the most salutary and transforming character. Its fundamental principle is *love in its essence*, as its highest law is that of *charity going forth in use*. Its end is the conjunction of the soul with the Lord in his Divine Good, and as a product of this, the spontaneous outflowing of the inner promptings in kindly affection and beneficent act towards the neighbor. From its essential principles it lays its requisitions upon the very inmost acting of the intellectual and moral man; and from the clear analysis it affords of the constituent elements of his being, he is enabled to discriminate more accurately the character of his motives and aims. Indeed he is conscious, from this source, of an exploring and inquisitorial power in these doctrines which he had not only never experienced, but had never conceived, under any other. He feels them continually probing his affections and thoughts to the quick, detecting the fallacies induced upon his understanding by an evil love, and stripping off the disguises which falsify the real ends of his conduct. In this respect he finds the writings of Swedenborg without a parallel. Whatever may have been his previous acquaintance with works devoted to the *trial of gracious affections*, he has never met with anything that so searches his soul "as with a lighted candle"—that so acts upon him with "the refiner's fire and the fuller's soap"—as the divine casuistry which is brought to bear upon his latent evils in these doctrines. This I can attest from my own experience, and I am confirmed in it by the uniform testimony of all those who have received them.

Why should not the system be practical, when the crown of its moral lessons is, that Truth is of no avail except so far as it is transcribed into Life—that the Light of an angel may co-exist with the Love of a fiend—that if the inner *proprium* of his being, or his Will, be not leavened with the celestial influx, while his Understanding is illuminated, he incurs the tremendous peril of profanation, which opens the lowest pit of hell to the soul? Why should it not be practical, when it brings one to the assurance of the most intimate connexion with spirits, both celestial and infernal, and teaches him that as he yields to the influences of the one or the other, he acquires a corresponding nature, and either appoints for himself a heritage of woe with the lost, or lays up a life in the bosom of angels in heaven? Why should it not be practical, when it humbles him in the dust by the assertion of an innate depravity that has seized upon the heart's core of his moral being, and brought him into native alliance with the foulest spirits of the universe, and when its most elementary teaching is, that he has no good of his own—that he can do no good of himself—that by the law not merely of his redemption, but of his creation, he is momentarily dependent on the Divine influx for every emotion, affection, and impulse that savors of heaven and tends to lift him thither?

It is unquestionably true, however, that the piety inculcated by the doctrines of the New Church is of a more genial and cheerful stamp than that which is usually found under the auspices of the prevailing creeds, because the doctrines impart a higher and sublimer view of the infinite Love and Benignity of the Lord towards the human race, as willing the salvation of all, and ordering every event of

his Providence with a view to eternal ends of Mercy in regard to each individual, and incessantly aiming to withhold him from hell, so far as it can be done consistently with his moral freedom.* So it imparts also a new view of death, and its sequences, or, in other words, of our relation to the spiritual sphere. Death is, in this system, but a continuation of life, or a new step in the progress of the soul to its grand destination. The transition from this world to the next is but the rupture of the thin veil which separates, as it were, two apartments of the same house. It is but bringing us into open and sensible communication with those with whom we have been through life in real but unconscious association; and the development of the interior love, which constitutes our true character, merely perfects the union into which we enter with all congenial souls. As we are taught moreover that the universal kingdom of the Lord is a kingdom of *uses*, and as these *uses* are to be accomplished in fulfilling all the functions created by the thousand-fold relations of domestic, social, and civil life, no countenance is given to an ascetic or monastic style of living, but all are pressed to an active and cheerful, but upright, participation in the various callings which result from the constitution of society.† In a word, its entire adaptations and

* "Some suppose, that whosoever wishes to be happy in another life, ought by no means to live in the pleasures of the body, and of sensual things, but to refuse all such enjoyments; saying that those corporeal and worldly things are what draw off and detain the mind from spiritual and celestial life: but they who suppose so, and therefore resign themselves voluntarily to miseries, whilst they live in the world, are not informed as to the truth of the case. It is by no means forbidden any one to enjoy the pleasures of the body and of sensual things, viz. the pleasures arising from the possession of lands and wealth; the pleasures arising from honors and offices in the state; the pleasures of conjugal love, and of love towards infants and children; the pleasures of friendship and of social conversation; the pleasures of hearing, or of the sweetnesses of singing and music; the pleasures of sight, or of beauties, which are manifold, as handsome garments, well-furnished houses, beautiful gardens, and the like, which things are delightful from harmonies; the pleasures of smelling, or of the sweetnesses of odors; the pleasures of taste, or of the agreeableness and usefulness of meats and drinks; and the pleasures of touch; for these are the extreme or corporeal affections, which have their origin, as was said, from the interior affections: the interior affections, which are alive, all derive their delight from good and truth, and good and truth their delight from charity and faith, and in such case from the Lord, consequently from life itself, wherefore the affections and pleasures which are thence, are alive; and whereas genuine pleasures are from such source, they are never denied to any one; yea, when they are thence derived, then their delight indefinitely exceeds the delight which is not thence, and which is comparatively filthy."—*A. C.*, 995.

"Some think, that they who are in the faith, should remove from themselves all the delights of life, and all the pleasures of the body: but this I can assert, that delights and pleasures have never been denied to me; for I have been permitted to enjoy not only the pleasures of the body and the senses, like those who live (in the world), but I have also been permitted to enjoy such delights and felicities of life, as I believe, no persons in the whole world ever before enjoyed, which were greater and more exquisite than any person could imagine and believe. 1748, 20 Oct."—*Spir. Diary*, 3623.

† "With respect to the renunciation of the world, it is generally supposed to consist in an entire separation from the things of the world, particularly its riches and honors; and in a continual meditation about God, and salvation, and eternal life; and in spending one's time in prayer, and reading the Scriptures and other holy books; together with much self-chastisement and affliction. The renunciation of the world however doth not consist in these things; but to renounce the world is to love God and our neighbor; and God is loved when we live according to his commandments; and our neighbor is loved when we are employed in useful services. Wherefore to receive the life of Heaven, it is expedient that a man live in the world, and that he be employed there in some useful business or calling: A life separate from such worldly engagements is a life of thought and faith only, separate from a life of love and charity; the consequence whereof is, that all good will and good works towards our neighbor perish; in which case the spiritual life is like a house without a foundation, that in process of time either sinks into the ground, or becomes full of chinks and clefts, or is overturned by its own tottering weight."—*D. of the N. J.*, 126.

provisions are calculated to form a religious character deep, intelligent, enlightened, practical, serene, and full of hope. How far its benign tendencies are actually realized in the lives of its professors, I will not venture to affirm; but sure I am they will with one voice confess that if there be any deficiency on this score, it is not in the system, but in themselves, and that they need no more solemn admonitions as to the consequences of their short comings than those which are breathed into their inmost minds by the sanctions inseparable from the truths of their faith.

On the whole, I venture to entertain the hope, that the verdict pronounced upon the foregoing recital will not be, that I have exchanged the substance for the shadow of truth. In receding from the ground formerly occupied in respect to the tenets of my religious faith, I have been governed by evidence which has been to my own mind ample and imperative. The result has cost me a struggle which it is not easy for another to appreciate, unless he has been made the subject of a similar experience. The firmness which is requisite to enable one to *act out* fully his fidelity to truth, does not annihilate the susceptibilities of the heart to the revolted sympathy of friends, to the withdrawal of confidence, to inuendos of a mind unhinged, to harsh imputations, and to pity misplaced. Yet in the midst of all I am sustained by the consciousness, that in every step I have taken the actuating motive and the consequent course have been such as, if rightly appreciated, to entitle me to the continued respect of every lover of truth. It is impossible for a fair and generous mind to look with unfeeling eye on the struggles of an honest spirit pressing to the attainment of divine knowledge, and making a willing sacrifice of friendship, reputation, gain—everything that flesh holds dear—in proof of the sincerity and sanctity of its promptings. For every expression of kindly sentiment evinced by liberal minds, I am bound to be, and am, truly grateful. But I need it not for the sustaining of my own spirit in the sphere of faith into which it has come. My confidence has a higher patronage. The attainment of sublimer views of truth, witnessed to consciousness by their own intrinsic light, cannot well fail to be accompanied by a peace flowing down from its eternal fountain, and richly compensating all inferior losses and regrets. To the consolation arising from this source I would be devoutly thankful to the Divine Goodness for being able to say that I am not a stranger.

APPENDIX.

In making public the following letter received a few months since, it will be seen that I am but complying with the writer's desire. The sincerity and simplicity of spirit—the calmness of conviction—the fidelity to conscious truth which breathe though it, can scarcely fail to produce their due impression upon the reader. The writer had been previously in connexion with the Protestant Episcopal Church, and settled as a pastor at the South. The present is a specimen of several similar communications recently received from clergymen of different religious denominations.

AIKEN, S. C. *March 30th, 1846.*

PROF. BUSH,

Rev. and dear sir:

As you are aware from my letter some time ago, desiring some information of you in regard to the doctrines of the New Church, that I was engaged in examining them, it may be gratifying to you to know the result of my inquiry. After an investigation, conducted I trust with diligence, sobriety and sincere prayer, I have embraced them from the heart, as worthy of all acceptance. My impressions of Swedenborg, for many years, were those so commonly entertained of him, namely, that he was a great man demented; and they arose from the usual source of such impressions, entire ignorance of his writings and trusting the opinions of those who had no right to an opinion in the matter. My inquiry, it is true, was not commenced exactly in this frame of mind. Certain opinions formed from independent sources, gave me a curiosity to read his writings, and enabled me to do it without any strong prejudice, but also, without any particular bias to find in them a communication from Heaven. What was my surprise, to see his so-called reveries and dreams, gradually, as I read them, assuming the simple but vast, the harmonious but grand, dimensions of a system of truth founded emphatically on Scripture and confirmed by an insight into the spiritual world. Having reached my conclusion, I think now with amazement, that such a body of truth should have existed in the world so long almost entirely unrecognized. Surely there was never before such an impeachment of its blindness to spiritual things, save in the rejection of the Gospel by the Jews. The vastness, yet simplicity of this system—the wonderful consistency of its parts—the acuteness of its moral analysis—its wonderful science of correspondences, proving itself true by developing in scripture a sustained spiritual sense different from that of the letter, yet not contradicting it—its innumerable harmonies with the natural and the supernatural—its voice to the conscience, the love, and the interior perception of truth—all unite in a moral demonstration, that its expositor was, what he claimed to be, divinely commissioned. Those who in our day of quicker spiritual understanding can refuse their credence, after coming fairly in contact with it, would have rejected miracles in the grosser days of our Lord's first coming. For myself, when I consider only the intellectual *might* and *wisdom*, which characterize "The True Christian Religion" of Swedenborg, to say nothing of his other productions, I am almost willing to rest the whole cause

on the involuntary conviction, that the perversity of a lie could never be associated in the same mind with them. This excludes the supposition of fraud, and those qualities themselves, the supposition of derangement. Upon the *whole* evidence of his claims I have ventured all, and do it with a freedom and calmness not easily to be expressed. The opinions of the world *must* change on this subject, and the men who acknowledge Swedenborg as divinely illuminated pass only a *little* longer for pitiable enthusiasts. Meanwhile they can wait patiently for their redress, and even count it a small matter if it should not come; for great is the sustaining power of truth once felt and acted on. For truth is of the Lord, and to have it, is to have *Him* in the heart, and that is Heaven in its very essence. I will not express all my feelings on this subject; for my desire is that this communication should be made public; and as in the general determination to convict the adherents of the New Church of fanaticism, any warmth of expression is fatal evidence of a heated mind, I would not lay myself open to the same charge in defending them. On behalf of my cause, and not from any personal regards, I venture to disclaim the agency of excitement, or any other undue motive in my change of sentiment. My investigation was pursued apart from the contagion of those who revere the apostle of the New Church. It was encouraged by no friend: it was dissuaded by my relatives. The conclusion to which it tended has obliged me to give up my parish, and in that my support, and to take upon myself a name lying under great reproach. All this indeed does not prove a right decision, but it shows that the causes which commonly disturb the balance of the judgment did not operate with me; and so allow me to presume that my convictions arose from evidence.

You are at liberty to make this communication public in any way you like. And may the Lord, who, as I firmly believe, is setting up his New Church, rouse some, by means of it, from their carelessness and their prejudice to a candid inquiry into the subject. Accept my heartfelt thanks for the aid you have afforded me. May it be for your reward, that with all "those who watch for the morning," you may see it shine more and more towards the perfect day.

Ever sincerely yours,

ALFRED E. FORD.



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