

# EMANUEL SWEDENBORG

The Spiritual Columbus

*A SKETCH*

BY

U. S. E.

*SECOND EDITION (REVISED)*

"Judge a man as few find him."—OLD PROVERB



JAMES SPEIRS  
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## PREFACE.

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GREAT changes are taking place in the very structures of society. Old notions, like dilapidated houses, are passing away. New ones, possessing greater breadth and light and beauty are rising upon the ruins. The revolution is a silent one, accomplished over the heads of men *volens volens*, by forces noiseless as the sunshine. The opposition is strong, for the positions disturbed are ancient; but many opponents, rather than be "behind the age," have accepted the situation, at first with distrust, then with tolerance, then with ample wonder that such excellent things had not earlier arrived.

One of the symptoms of these changes (itself almost a revolution) is the attention now given by pulpit, platform, press, and in the social circle, to the remarkable theories which EMANUEL SWEDENBORG promulgated more than a hundred years ago.

Somehow or other SWEDENBORG is becoming a factor in many of the problems of to-day. His influence pervades modern literature and dogma to a surprising extent. His writings exist in many languages, and circulate by thousands every year. Many of the leaders of public opinion, and most of the public libraries, theological seminaries, and literary institutions possess them. Books, representing his views reduced to common parlance, multiply very fast, find a market, and are reviewed by the press, sometimes with favour, generally with respect. Further, a band of intelligent followers, whose strength is not to be measured by the foot-rule of the statistician, by means of lectures and "Silent Missionaries" make SWEDENBORG'S doctrines widely known, and defend them—when they get an opportunity.

Even the Scientists, who, Dr. GARTH WILKINSON tells

us, "take off their grave hats to a new beetle or a fresh vegetable alkaloid," and steer clear of the great facts that are dear to the hearts of men and women, are sending out spies to explore the Unseen Universe which SWEDENBORG has described. They have begun with Spiritism; they will come to SWEDENBORG. EMERSON wittily observes (*Letters and Social Aims*)—"The savans are chatty and vain, but hold them hard to principle, and definition, and they become mute and near-sighted. What is motion? what is beauty? what is life? what is force?—push them hard, and they will not be loquacious; they will come to PLATO to PROCLUS and to SWEDENBORG." Some are already there.

The Want of the age is a Theosophy which is at once Scriptural, Scientific, Rational, and Practical. In every previous age man's necessity has been God's opportunity. Is ours an exception? How then is SWEDENBORG and his works to be accounted for? They cannot be squeezed to death nor explained away; already they have survived several generations, and are still "new."

And *if* this much-needed Christian psychology *does* lie hid in the works of SWEDENBORG?—loyalty to the truth, liberty of conscience, freedom of voice and pen, all those noblest elements of English character demand its resurrection though the skies fall.

In the following pages I have not tried to praise or blame, defend or denounce, vindicate or asperse SWEDENBORG; that has been sufficiently done by his friends and enemies. I have aimed rather to present a pen-and-ink sketch, leaving the reader to place it in such "frame" as suits his fancy, and being myself more concerned that my description be accurate and impartial, than whether it favours SWEDENBORG or the reverse. U. S. E.

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# EMANUEL SWEDENBORG :

## THE SPIRITUAL COLUMBUS.



NOORTHOUCK, author of *A New History of London*, published in London in 1773, describes Cold-bath-fields as consisting "of some streets which form the extremity of this part of the town. These surround a square of the same name consisting of small neat houses in the centre of which is a handsome old house with a small garden and containing a good cold bath, which gives name to the neighbourhood. The north side of the square is as yet open to the fields." One of the streets running into this square was named Great Bath-street, and here at No. 26, there lived towards the end of the last century, one Richard Shearsmith, a wigmaker. One day about the beginning of August 1771, Mr. Shearsmith was walking near his house when he heard a somewhat familiar

voice behind him cry out, "Dat be he! dat be he!" Turning round, Mr. Shearsmith found the voice emanated from the depths of a hackney coach, and soon recognised in its owner an aged foreign nobleman who had lodged with him some time previously, and who now communicated to Shearsmith his desire to resume his former apartments. The rooms were let, but the tenants willingly gave way, and Shearsmith's new lodger soon found himself comfortably settled. This old gentleman was none other than the Hon. Emanuel Swedenborg, without cavil one of the most extraordinary men that ever lived, and of whose life we now present a brief sketch. In person Swedenborg was about five feet nine inches in height, rather thin, and of a brown complexion. His eyes according to Shearsmith, were of a brownish grey colour, nearly hazel, and rather small, but in a portrait painted at Stockholm, Swedenborg's eyes are represented as blue and large, and there is little doubt Shearsmith was mistaken. He used spectacles. He generally attired himself in a dark brown coat and waistcoat, and black velvet breeches, but when he walked abroad he appeared in a suit of black velvet made after an old fashion; long ruffles at his wrist; a cocked hat, a sword with a curious hilt and a silver scabbard, and carried a gold headed

cane in his hand. Shearsmith says he seldom laughed but always had a cheerful smile upon his countenance. "There was something very pleasing in his physiognomy, and a dignity in his erect stature," says another authority. Other accounts say "his eyes were always smiling, and his countenance was illumined by the light of his uncommon genius." His manners were those of a nobleman of the last century; wherever he went he left a good impression; although somewhat reserved, was complaisant, accessible to all, and had something very loving and attractive in his demeanour. He was very fond of little children, and when he went for a stroll, would stock his pockets with gingerbread which he distributed amongst them as they gambolled in the fields and square. Practically he was a vegetarian in diet and there are on the lists of the Vegetarian Society a goodly number of his followers. Shearsmith said he sometimes ate a little fish, and once tasted some pigeon-pie, but usually his diet was bread and butter, milk, and coffee much sweetened, almonds, raisins, fruit, vegetables, biscuits, cakes, &c. He was also a teetotaler, though not a Good Templar exactly, since, it is related, he occasionally drank in company a glass or two of wine, but never more, and once this small quantity upset him for "two or

three days after." Of supper he took none. He was very fond of coffee which he used to make for himself by a little stove. His manuscripts bear traces of his habit of snuff-taking, but of the vice of opium eating, which we once heard charged against him, he was quite innocent.

Swedenborg is one of the world's puzzles. He bothered Emerson, one of the deepest thinkers of the age. "His writings," says Emerson, "would be a sufficient library to a lonely and athletic student. One of the missourians and mastodons of literature, he is not to be measured by whole colleges of ordinary scholars. No one man is perhaps able to judge of the merits of his works on so many subjects. . . What earnestness and weightiness, his eye never roving, without one swell of vanity, or one look to self in any common form of literary pride! a theoretic or speculative man, but whom no practical man in the universe could affect to scorn. Plato is a gownsman; his garment though of purple and almost sky woven, is an academic robe and hinders action with its voluminous folds. But this mystic is awful to Cæsar. Lycurgus himself would bow." Few great men were ever fully appreciated till long after they had passed beyond the reach of their contemporary critics; but it requires

an extraordinary greatness to survive for more than a century the bitter opposition and abuse of the world at large. The heap of obloquy and prejudice poured upon the name of Swedenborg for a number of years was so great that even now when he is beginning to be better appreciated, it envelopes his works as with a Scotch mist, and in some circles a man had need of moral courage to pass through that mist to the other side, seeing that to do so he must leave old friends and associates behind. As Fletcher says, Swedenborg, in the eye of that "hydra-headed monster, 'public opinion,' is looked upon as the type of mysticism, the exponent of eccentricity, the high priest of heterodoxy, the promulgator of a madman's creed." And "fling the faintest whisper of Swedenborgianism on the wind, and there is a hum and murmur among the *hoi polloi*—learned and foolish, married and single, washed and unwashed, jabbering and stammering, flouting and shouting, groaning and weeping, holding their breath and gathering up their garments as though a pestilence passed by that way."

It is not, however, necessary to become a Swedenborgian before one is able to regard Swedenborg and his works with that common respect due to all, and without that prejudice which makes unjust

judges. We believe Swedenborg wrote simply for the sake of the truth, and in the honest conviction that what he wrote was the truth. No man can do more—none should do less. Never were literary labours so freely placed at the feet of mankind as these Herculean tomes of Swedenborg. There is nothing said about "translation reserved," or "copyright," or "royalty," no more than in the case of the Bible. Like the Book of books the works of Swedenborg seem to have been "cast upon the waters" of human history, to be accepted or rejected just as men, in the exercise of their freedom may elect. When we find an author enthusiastically praised by all who have *read* him (and by such thoughtful readers as Emerson, Coleridge, Paxton Hood, Kant, Dr. Mill, Morell, Garth Wilkinson, and many others we might name) and almost never blamed by any but those who have *not* read, one is apt to consider that there is "something in it." In "judging a man as we find him" much depends upon *how* we find him, or, if he be dead, who has biographed him.

It is a good thing for an author's fame if the duty of chronicling his career fall into the hands of an honest and friendly critic. Dr. Johnson had his Boswell, Charles Dickens his Forster ; many others of our

great ones have had a kind and capable hand to gather up their literary remains and decently inter them in the hands of some enterprising publisher, "in the hope of a speedy and sure resurrection." Not so with Swedenborg, of all men most liable to be misunderstood, and therefore most needing such kindly offices. One self-constituted authority stoutly maintains he was mad, and naïvely declines to read his works; another as stoutly holds him forth as the very quintessence of philosophical acumen, shrewd common sense, and sound piety; while a third will give him the infallible honours of a pope, not only unsolicited, but against his will. Not that there are no biographers of Swedenborg. Dr. I. F. E. Tafel, of Tubingen (a relative of the Rev. Professor Tafel, of the New Church in the Camden-road), collected and published in four vols. in 1839 an enormous number of letters and documents relating to Swedenborg, and out of the material thus furnished several biographies were published in America and England. Amongst these we know of none equal, as regards beauty of language, fairness of criticism, and grasp of his subject, to that published in 1849 by Dr. Garth Wilkinson, an eminent homœopathic physician practising in Wimpole-street. Next to this stands that by the Rev. Paxton Hood, now the

respected minister of Offord-road Congregational Chapel. His work is an eloquent tribute to Swedenborg's acceptability as a great and *sane* religious teacher. It is entitled *Emanuel Swedenborg, a Biography and an Exposition*, and was published in 1854. We believe it (as also the work by Dr. Wilkinson) is out of print, but, owing to the author's literary fame, has had many readers in circles to which Swedenborg was previously unknown. In 1854-55 Mr. William White, then the manager of the Swedenborg Society's publishing business in Bloomsbury-street, wrote a most compact and readable *Life of Swedenborg*, which, after passing through the pages of the *Phonetic Journal*, was reprinted as a book in 1856. In 1867 the same gentleman, who had, it appears, in the interim been relieved of his connection with the Swedenborg Society in consequence of tendencies to Spiritism, wrote and published a work in two volumes 8vo, entitled *Emanuel Swedenborg, his Life and Writings*. This, the largest and most complete biography of Swedenborg in existence, is, unfortunately, far from being a satisfactory one to the ordinary reader. Whether White changed his views of Swedenborg when he ceased his relations with the Swedenborg Society, or whether he wished to make a sensational book, it is difficult



to say. There is, however, a marked difference between the biography in the *Phonetic Journal* and the one now before us, in which we detect many inconsistencies of opinion. Still, Mr. White's book is a most excellent one, and must have cost him much labour. Like all biographers he finds much space for high praise of his subject, and quotes most fully from his writings.

Emanuel Swedenborg was born on the 29th of January, 1688, at Stockholm. His father, Jesper Svedberg, of whom more anon, was the son of one Daniel Isaksson, a copper smelter, of Fahlun, in Sweden, and bearing in mind that in later years Emanuel maintained that the mental capacities of a child are from his father, the physical from the mother, it would not be uninteresting to trace briefly the characters of his immediate ancestors. According to English notions Jesper Svedberg should have been Jesper Isaksson, but, after a custom not even yet extinct, he was surnamed, not after his father, but his father's little homestead, Sveden. Daniel Isaksson and his wife were a poor couple, but eminently pious and industrious, and possessed withal by an inextinguishable faith in Providence. To many parents an addition to a family already larger than appears consistent with temporal comfort

is a sore trouble ; to Isaksson it was considered a proof of divine favour. He reckoned his children as the source of all his blessings, and would say after dining, " Thank you, my children, for dinner. God has given me food for your sake ! " The truth of the psalmist's declaration, " They that look to the Lord shall never lack any good thing," received strong confirmation in Isaksson's case. He joined a party of speculators to open up a deserted copper mine, and the speculation succeeding he became a rich and flourishing citizen. Jesper was thereby enabled to receive the best collegiate education that could be obtained at the time. From an early age Jesper displayed literary tastes, a fondness for his Bible and religious conversation, and was never so pleased as when playing at preaching. His life as a student, in the midst of the temptations of a university course, was marked by peculiar religious zeal and fervour, and at this time he had one or two remarkable visions of angels. In 1683 he was made chaplain to the King's Regiment of Cavalry Life-Guards, and in the same year married Sara, the daughter of Albrecht Behm, assessor of the Royal College of Mines in Sweden. His wife brought him a considerable dowry, and after spending six months at home he devoted a year to travel on the Continent.

Three months were pleasantly spent in Oxford (where he made acquaintance with Bishop Fell), and in London. He was "deeply impressed with the sanctified lives of the English clergy, and the strict observance of Sunday by the people." What Leather-lane was like then we do not know. About the year 1686, his free, manly preaching having won upon the king (Charles XI.), he was appointed court chaplain. The elevation was quick and sudden, but Jesper was not dazzled, nor did he lose his head. He applied himself still more strenuously to the advocacy of some much needed church reforms, and with such blunt fervour as made him many enemies. One day the king told him, "Thou hast many enemies." The reply was, "The servant of the Lord, your majesty, is not good for much who has not enemies." At another time the king said, "Ask what you will and I will give it to you." Here was an opportunity of self-elevation, but Svedberg's unselfish piety was equal to the severe strain. "From that day," he tells us, "I became more earnest and wary in all that I said or did. *I asked nothing for myself or mine*—not even half a stiver, but spoke to the king freely concerning men, meritorious and poor men, and he always attended to my desires. . . . When he asked me who should be appointed to such and

such a living I named the person I thought, saying, he is serious and one of the old sort, and he straightway got the place. *Hence many good men came into rich livings, to their happy surprise, and without any idea of who it was that had singled them out for promotion.*" "As I found every day freer access to his majesty, I prayed with my whole heart unto God that I might not become proud nor misuse my opportunities, but that He should apply me to His glory and service. . . Moreover, I laid down these two rules for myself—1st, to meddle in no affairs, political or mundane, with which I had no business, and, 2nd, never to speak ill of any one, should he be even my worst enemy and persecutor." While the sun of royal popularity was thus smiling upon Jesper Svedberg, his third child and second son, Emanuel, the subject of this sketch, was born unto him.

Svedberg had a pleasant fancy in naming his children. It was not by chance, but special selection, that Emanuel was so named. Mindful that scriptural men are not named after their ancestors but after some great human principle or divine attribute, he named all his children (except two) in this manner; and, writing in 1729, when Emanuel was forty years old, he says, "Emanuel, my son's name, signifies 'God with us.' And blessed be the Lord's name.

God has indeed to this hour been with him, and may God be further with him until he is eternally united with Him in His kingdom." Swedenborg was educated with great care at the University of Upsal, especially in the subjects of the learned languages, mathematics, mineralogy, and natural philosophy. Of Emanuel's childhood and school life but little is known. When he was but four years old his father was made third professor of theology in the University of Upsala, and very shortly after the king appointed him first professor and dean of Upsala. So that young Svedberg's earliest years were spent in the precincts of that grand old cathedral of Upsala, estimated to be the finest Gothic building in Scandinavia, where Sweden's kings went to be crowned, and where the bones of many of them were laid. "Upsala was at that time a pleasantly situated city of some 5,000 inhabitants, and the buildings attached to the University (two of which were occupied by the Svedberg family) opened out into a spacious square," in which, doubtless, Svedberg gambolled with his brothers and schoolfellows. Writing to his friend Dr. Beyer in 1769—years after these youthful days were over—Swedenborg thus describes them:—"From my fourth to my tenth year my thoughts were constantly engrossed in reflecting on

But literature had not to Emanuel the charms of science. His chosen studies were mathematics, astronomy, and mechanics, and he eagerly sought the acquaintance of men who were masters of them. He visited John Flamsteed at the Greenwich Observatory. Very likely he attended meetings of the Royal Society, which in 1710 moved from Gresham College to a house in Crane-court, Fleet-street, and there he would see the venerable president Sir Isaac Newton, with Sir Hans Sloane as secretary, and surrounded by the *savans* of the time. At Oxford he met Edmund Halley, "a man second only to Newton," who was striving to discover the method of finding the longitude by the moon. He left England in 1711 and went to Holland, from thence through Brussels and Valenciennes to Paris and Versailles, where he spent another year. In Paris he became acquainted with the celebrated Pierre Varignon, at whose house he met Fontenelle, "the man of taste and wide general knowledge of science and literature." Probably, too, he met with Voltaire, then a youth of 20, just making himself heard; also the celebrated preacher, Massillon, who was then on the pinnacle of his fame. From Paris he went to Hamburg, then to Griefsvalde, where he stayed

till 1715, "alternating mathematics with poetry." Of his social position at this time Wilkinson says: "Swedenborg started in life with powerful family connections; one of his sisters married Eric Benzelius, a man of great talents and influence, and subsequently Archbishop of Upsal; another was united to Lars Benzelstierna, governor of a province, and whose son became a bishop. There can be no doubt that he had abundant patronage with the Court, in addition to the great talents and moral integrity which were his personal commendation." While abroad he wrote continually to Eric Benzelius and to the Royal Society of Sciences at Upsal (of which he was a member), detailing whatever inventions and discoveries he met with, and drained his purse to purchase models of machinery and copies of scientific works, which he sent home to Sweden, that his beloved country might not be behind the age.

From some of these letters we gather that he had invented several important mechanical contrivances, amongst which were a torpedo ship, several new hydraulic machines, a drawbridge, an air-gun-mitrailleuse, an aquatic clock, and "a flying chariot, demonstrating the possibility of floating and moving in the air." He interested himself strongly in an attempt to

discover a method of ascertaining the longitude at sea, for which the English Government were offering a large sum. He acquired a thorough knowledge of Oriental and European languages, wrote and published several scientific treatises, also some fables and poems, and an oration on Charles XII. "Swedenborg's poems," says Wilkinson, "display fancy, but a controlled imagination; they were hardly more than a polite recognition of poetry, that sweeter and weaker sex of truth." Swedenborg was not a poet; he was intended for far different work, and he had the good sense to quickly detect it. This was his first and last offering to the muses.

At home in 1716-18 Emanuel was busy as editor of a Swedish periodical entitled *Dædalus Hyperboreus*, and devoted to the stimulation of genius and enterprise in the direction of mathematical and mechanical discovery. But it did not pay, and after six numbers had been issued, ceased altogether. It was useful, however, to Swedenborg, since it brought him into contact with his learned countrymen, with one of whom, Christopher Polheim—"the Scandinavian Archimedes," he became closely intimate. Polheim it was who introduced young Emanuel to King Charles, at Lund, in 1716. Charles XII. was a quick dis-



coverer of ability, and he detected much in Svedberg. He accordingly offered him (amongst others) the post of Assessor to the Royal College of Mines, with a seat and voice in the House, "especially when mechanical matters were being discussed." Intrigue was busy at Court against young Svedberg even thus early, but the king actually compelled a disappointed candidate for the assessorship to sit down at the table and write out the warrant appointing young Svedberg to it—"in order that he may," runs the document, "co-operate with Polheim, Counsellor of Commerce. in his affairs and inventions." King Charles speedily became attached to his new *protégé*, and some interesting accounts of the intimacy are extant. It was about this time that Swedenborg fell in love. White says King Charles "was so pleased with his two engineers, that to seal their partnership he advised Polheim to give Emanuel one of his daughters in marriage. This Polheim was very willing to do, and Emanuel very willing to have done, for living in Polheim's house he had become enamoured of his second daughter, Ementia, a girl of fourteen. She did not care for Emanuel, and would not allow herself to be betrothed. Her father, however, caused a written agreement to be drawn up, promising her to him at some

future day. This document as an obedient child Emerentia signed ; but *her heart being elsewhere*, she took to sighs and sadness, and her brother, moved by her misery, stole the agreement from Emanuel's desk, who soon missing it (as he was used to read it often) besought Polheim to replace it with a new one ; but fully discovering the state of Emerentia's affections, he at once relinquished her hand, and left her father's house."

This love adventure, which has quite a tinge of romance about it, was Swedenborg's first and last. He never married, and had he done so it is very probable the whole course of his life would have been different. There is an idle tale that he had a "mistress" in Italy, and to this White, in a fit of credulity, gives currency, overlooking the fact that Swedenborg's own words on the subject, "I had a mistress *in my youth* in Italy," come to us second hand ; and as Swedenborg was never in Italy until fifty-two years of age, and the whole tone of his life is of the purest, there is very likely a mistake somewhere. Moreover, "a mistress" was a word then often used as an equivalent to "sweetheart."

In 1718 Emanuel was enabled to render his royal benefactor an important service in connection with the siege of Fredericks-hall, a Norwegian fortress which Charles

was attacking. Swedenborg designed and constructed carriages, by means of which "two galleys, five large boats, and a sloop were transported overland from Stromstadt to Idorfjol, a distance of fourteen miles." Under cover of these vessels the king brought his heavy artillery under the walls of Frederickshall. It was at this siege that King Charles met his death—on the 11th of December, 1718. The year after, Queen Ulrica was pleased to ennoble Jesper Svedberg's family, and thenceforth their name was changed to Swedenborg. But the only benefit arising from this mark of royal appreciation was the possession of a seat and voice in the house of nobles of the Equestrian Order, and Swedenborg was neither Count nor Baron, as has been supposed.

In 1721 we find Swedenborg hard at work as contributor to a Swedish journal—the *Acta Literaria Sueciæ*, and author of several scientific works, amongst which was "An Attempt to explain the Phenomena of Chemistry and Physics by Geometry." Another was on "The Elemental Nature of Fire." In the work on chemistry, besides throwing much new light on the subject of "colours," and many other moot questions, he anticipates the Atomic theory, the origination of which has always been attributed to the celebrated Dalton.

And in the work on the Elemental Nature of Fire, besides astonishing us with many advanced opinions on that subject, he gives to the world the principle of construction of a new air-tight stove. Many years after Dr. Orr, of Washington, brought out a patent for the stove which is now so extensively used in America; but it was discovered that Swedenborg had made the principle known more than a century before, and Orr's patent was annulled. In Leipsic in 1722 he published his *Miscellaneous Observations on the Physical Sciences*, and this too was full of new and daring speculations on every branch of science, many of them anticipatory of discoveries for which the world has praised less great authors. It was in reference to this work that the celebrated French chemist Dumas ascribed to Swedenborg the origination of the modern Science of Crystallography. "We are indebted to him," says Dumas, "for the first idea of making cubes, tetrahedrons, pyramids, and the different crystalline forms by the grouping of spherical particles,—an idea that has since been renewed by distinguished men, Wollaston in particular." In the middle of 1722 Swedenborg returned home again, and but little is known of his employments and thoughts for some years. In 1724 he was offered the Professorship

of Mathematical Science in Upsal University—no mean honour, but he declined, because he disliked *theoretical* speculation, which “it is the fatality of mathematicians to abide in,” he says. In 1729, at the age of forty-one, he was elected a member of the Royal Academy of Sciences, Stockholm, and shortly after this, he, after another tour through Germany, published simultaneously at Dresden and Leipsic his *Opera Philosophica et Mineralia*, in three volumes. The last two are on dry technical subjects; the first which is designated “The Principia; or, First Principles of Natural Things,” is a work which secured for its author a wide reputation. Gærres, a celebrated Roman Catholic Professor in Germany, says “It is a production indicative of profound thought in all its parts, and not unworthy of being placed by the side of Newton’s *Principia*.” Yet, “in spite,” says Dr. Wilkinson, “of the signal piety displayed throughout this work, it was prohibited by the Papal authority in 1739,” probably because Swedenborg’s hypotheses, like those of Galileo, were not in accord with Papal notions of what was orthodox science.

The *Principia* is an elaborate attempt to explain, by means of geometry, the generation of the elements, the creation of matter, and the nature of the hidden forces

operating in nature. Judged from this work alone, Swedenborg is considered second to none among speculative natural philosophers. In the *Principia* he anticipated many discoveries, for which, in latter years, other great men have been credited—*e g.*, Herschel is the reputed discoverer of our place and system in the milky way, yet four years before he was born Swedenborg had explicitly stated this ; La Grange's theory of a cyclar mutation and return of the planets to their order—pronounced by Professor Playfair to be “ next to Newton's discovery of the elliptical orbits of the planets—without doubt the noblest truth in physical astronomy,” is repeatedly and accurately stated in Swedenborg's *Principia* forty-four years before La Grange's theory was published. The translatory motion of the stars along the milky way was made known by Professor O. F. Mossotte in 1839, but in 1733 Swedenborg announced this—one of the most magnificent truths of astronomy—in his *Principia*. Kant, Mitchell, and some others are commonly credited with the discovery of the clustering of the stars into starry systems, as planets form solar systems, but Swedenborg in his *Principia* promulgated this fact when Kant was a boy of ten years old. La Place is popularly supposed to have started the “ nebular

hypothesis, but seventy-five years previously, Swedenborg had propounded a somewhat similar—some say a more correct—theory in his *Principia*. White says—"La Place owned that Buffon was the first to suggest the theory of the origin of the planets from the sun. Now Buffon was acquainted with Swedenborg's *Principia*, as is evident from the fact that an eminent London bookseller (Mr. Bohn, of Henrietta-street, Covent-garden) recently (1854) sold a copy of the *Principia*, containing Buffon's autograph." These are but a few out of many of the remarkable features of this remarkable book. It is full of originality on the subject of magnetism and electricity, and anticipates many discoveries, with which Franklin, Hansteen, and later scientists are credited. So in chemical matters. Priestley's celebrated experiments, in which he proved the composite nature of the air, and the discovery made almost simultaneously (1783) by Cavendish, Watt, Lavoisier, and Priestley, that water was also a compound, and not an element, were clearly anticipated in this *Principia*. Had Swedenborg not become a theologian, and hid by his later life the illustrious labours of his earlier years, we should not have had reason to wonder why he appears to be so much overlooked by scientific men.

In the same year, 1734, he published a small metaphysical work on the Infinite and Final Cause of Creation, and on the Mechanism of the Intercourse between the Soul and the Body. It is an attempt to demonstrate almost to the very senses the existence of an Infinite Creator, and of an immortal soul in the body. The views Swedenborg here put forth were considerably modified by his later experiences; but it seems that he is already drawing near to the gulf which separates this world from the next, a gulf over which he was (according to his own belief), under the directions of the Great Engineer, to construct a bridge for the use of all future time, so that there should be no more the fear of death, nor hesitation about what follows. Swedenborg's scientific reputation now grew wider and wider, and his correspondence was eagerly sought by *savans* of the day. He was appointed a member of the Academy of Sciences at Petersburg, and acquired a friendly intimacy with the celebrated Christian Wolff. Between these men, so much alike in many things, there was yet an important element of difference. Wolff was "always a spinner of ingenuities and conceptions," and "a facile metaphysician after Leibnitz." Swedenborg was a philosophical, scientific explorer, a seeker after solid facts, a patient inquisitor



of nature. In July, 1735, Swedenborg's father passed away to his eternal rest, leaving, it is said, a considerable sum, a portion of which fell to Emanuel. A year after Assessor Swedenborg obtained leave to travel for three or four years, giving up half his income (1,200 thalers) to his substitute. In these travels of which he published an "Itinerarium," he visited Denmark, Holland, Hanover, France, Italy, &c. At Rotterdam he notes down reflections on the prosperity of the Dutch, which he attributed mainly to the form of Government being Republican, which he says "is more pleasing to God than an absolute monarchy." "In a republic no veneration or worship is paid to man, but the highest and lowest think themselves equal to kings and emperors, and the only one whom they worship is God." Monarchies he considered, (and he had experience at court,) were bad for morals; inducing simulation and dissimulation, flattery, pretences, counterfeit qualities of mind and breeding slavishness, shame, and fear.

In Paris Swedenborg visited every place of note, from the operas, gardens, concerts, to the halls of science and art. His omnivorous curiosity left no sight unseen, and his watchful eye was quick to detect the causes of the ruin which afterwards over-

took that fair city. "Pleasure," he says, "or more properly speaking, sensuality, appears to be there carried to its possible summit," and "one-fifth of the whole possessions of the kingdom is in the hands of the ecclesiastical orders. If this condition of things lasts long, the ruin of the Empire will be speedy!" From France he went to Italy, where he spent nearly a year. He was near being assassinated by a *vetturino* on his way from Novarro to Milan. In 1740-1 he returned to Amsterdam, and forthwith published a famous work, *The Economy of the Animal Kingdom*. This work treats not of the "kingdom of animals," but of the economy and constitution of the human body or animal *man*. "In man," said Swedenborg, "the world of nature is concentrated, and in him, therefore, as a microcosm, the whole universe may be contemplated from the beginning to the end." The work deals with the composition and essence of the blood, the arteries and veins, the circulation of the blood, the motions of the heart, the brain and lungs, the formation of the chick in the egg, circulation in the foetus, and other subjects connected with the higher departments of anatomy and physiology. The aim and object of this work was the desire to find the soul in and through the body—a desire which possessed Sweden-

borg strongly, and which was, perhaps, fostered by the opinion then prevalent amongst many scientists that the soul and the "animal spirits" were one.

In this work, as in his *Principia*, Swedenborg anticipates several discoveries which are generally ascribed to later philosophers; e.g., he forestalls Wilson's theory of the circulation of the blood, Schlichting's theory of the coincidence of motion between the brain and lungs, and Monro's discovery of a passage of communication between the two lateral ventricles of the cerebrum, which is still known by the name of "the foramen of Monro." Although, as may be expected, Swedenborg failed in his quest, his work remains a valuable contribution to the study of anatomy, physiology, and psychology—of which, as Dr. Wilkinson truly says, "no philosophical anatomist has done justice to himself unless he has humbly read and studied." Emerson says of this work, "His varied and solid knowledge make his style lustrous with points and shooting spicula of thought, resembling one of those winter mornings when the air sparkles with crystals;" and Coleridge says, "I remember nothing in Lord Bacon superior; few passages equal either in depth of thought or in richness, dignity, or felicity of diction, or in the weighti-

ness of the truths contained in these articles."

In this work there are yet more marked traces of coming changes in his career. The "peculiar respiration" before mentioned induced him to pay particular attention to the intimate relation which he (as already stated) discovered to exist between the mind and brain and lungs. He gives hints and outlines of a "doctrine of correspondences" and a "doctrine of degrees," speaks of the "spiritual body," of the non-resurrection of the material body, the soul's self-condemnation and judgment when brought into the light of heaven, of this world as the "seminary" of heaven, of God as "life itself," and of creation as but a manifestation of the divine as the image of a man in a mirror, of the sun of nature and the Sun of Heaven, and also of that doctrine already adverted to, and which Aristotle had long before stated that "man derives his soul from his father, and his body from his mother." Failing in his quest for the soul, and attributing the failure to haste and over eagerness, he set to work again and composed another large work, *The Animal Kingdom*. In the preface he says, "I am determined to allow myself no rest until I have traversed the universal animal kingdom to the soul. By bending my course inwards continually, I shall open

all the doors which lead to her, and at length contemplate the soul herself by divine permission." The singleness of purpose of this painstaking student is well exemplified in the following quotation, "Of what consequence is it to me that I should persuade anyone to embrace my opinions? Let his own reason persuade him. I do not undertake this work for the sake of honour or money; both of which I shun rather than seek, because they disquiet the mind and because I am content with my lot; but for the sake of truth, which alone is immortal."

But his work was never finished; three volumes only were printed. A large number of manuscripts were left unpublished, amongst them a work on the brain of over 1,000 pages. We believe these manuscripts have recently been photo-lithographed by the Swedenborg Society. With the exception of a small prose poem on "The Worship and Love of God," an allegorical description of the genesis of the world and Adam and Eve, of which J. W. Fletcher says:—"The boldness of this conception of a genesis is equalled by the logical precision with which it is carried out, and the poetical beauty with which it is described," Swedenborg published no more secular works. During the years 1743-5, whilst he was hard at work on his uncompleted book, *The Animal Kingdom*, he was the subject of

strange other-world experiences, spiritual temptations and trials, dreams and visions—verily a state of transition which it has perhaps been the lot of no man before or since to endure. With his usual *cacoæthes scribendi* and passion for self analysis, he noted down all these strange phenomena in a "book of dreams," which lay hid and unknown until 1859. Into the discovery thus made and the doings of Swedenborg in London in 1744, when he lodged in Fetter-lane, we must now ask the reader to accompany us.

Had Swedenborg died in 1743 his name would have ranked on the scroll of history as one of the wisest and most prolific thinkers of that age; as the compeer—some say the superior—of such men as Aristotle, Plato, Newton, Kepler, Herschel, and Bacon—although the spread of his writings was greatly encumbered by their publication in Latin instead of English. Looking back in brief retrospect over his career, we find, as Paxton Hood truly says, his education as a student of *nature* was now complete. There are symptoms from the earliest that he was at heart no mere worshipper of nature, nor could the highest gifts she had to bestow satisfy the cravings of this patient truth-seeker. He excelled as a mineralogist, mathematician, astronomer, philosopher, and theosophist—in

every department mounting to the summit of the known, and shadowing forth ideas and facts which a century or more after were still new—and in the midst of all we see the simple-mindedness and blameless life of the practical Christian. His domestic life, college life, studies, travels, his childhood, youth, and ripe manhood are, we find, marked by strong religious principle, filial affection, zeal for his country, and freedom from moral taint. In none of his writings is there to be found a coarse, vulgar, or irreverent sentence; yet he wrote at a time when impurity and scepticism were not only common but fashionable vices. Although he had the poetic element in him, and could pen the most charming fiction, he was not a poet or a novelist, and would have fared badly as a "special" for the *Daily Telegraph*. In general his style is far from being imaginative or fanciful; on the contrary, his language is solid, dry, diffuse, yet smooth and deep as a mountain lake. He was speculative, but never rested in theories, disliked theoretical sciences, and hated synthesis. No writer paid more attention to logic and facts, none worked out theorems and problems more laboriously. He was ever athirst for knowledge on the highest subjects the human mind can contemplate—the mystery and process of creation, the *nexus* between the natural,

the human and the divine, the nature of the soul and its seat in and intercourse with the body, were some of the problems he set himself to elucidate ; choosing experience, reason, and geometry as his three graces and guides.

Baffled in his attempt to explain creation according to geometrical principles and to find that "electricity is life," he plunged into metaphysics—and lost himself. Then he toiled in the dissecting-room and studied anatomical works, that, peradventure, he might find in the body of man "the epitome of nature"—the soul and its mode of life. Failing again, he unhesitatingly throws aside the labours of twelve years, and sets to work to remodel his methods and enlarge his inquiries. And now he begins to get inklings and glimpses of that which he is in search of, and like the truth-seeker that he undoubtedly was, he places himself confidently on this new tidal wave of progress, and after much buffeting about and many anxieties he ultimately finds himself landed upon the shores of a new world, which he instantly begins to explore and report upon as accurately and laboriously as years before he had reported scientific novelties for his native country.

Swedenborg did not become a seer all at once ; that would have indeed been madness, of which as yet he evinces no symp-



toms. He had to undergo much preparation. Wilkinson devotes much space to a careful examination of that peculiar respiration of Swedenborg's, already referred to, and other initiatory symptoms of seership which he exhibited from his earliest years. There is, says Wilkinson, an intimate correspondence between the action of the lungs and of the brain. "Thought commences and corresponds with respiration. When a man entertains a long thought he draws a long breath; when he thinks quickly his breath vibrates with rapid alternations; when the tempest of anger shakes his mind his breath is tumultuous; when his soul is deep and tranquil, so is his respiration." All this is self-evident. Wilkinson then carefully collocates the numerous statements of Swedenborg himself upon this important point, from which we glean that he was at first subject to insensible breathing in infancy, when in prayer, occasionally in his studies, and particularly when composing his more thoughtful works. He noted that his breathing was tacit, and when in intense thought it ceased for a time. Afterwards, "when heaven was opened to him and he spoke with spirits, sometimes for nearly an hour together, he hardly breathed at all." The same phenomena occurred when he was going to sleep, and so exactly did his breathing

correspond with his thoughts that he was enabled to withdraw himself entirely from the things of the body. The above may be usefully supplemented by the following note, extracted from Swedenborg's *Spiritual Diary*, in which he speaks of himself impersonally. "For many years before his mind was opened, and he was enabled to speak with spirits, there were not only dreams informing him of the matters that were written, but also changes of state when he was writing, and a peculiar, extraordinary light in his writings. Afterwards there were many visions when his eyes were shut, light miraculously given, spirits influencing him as sensibly as if they touched his bodily senses, temptations also from evil spirits almost overwhelming him with horror, fiery lights, words spoken in early morning, and many similar events." Flames of various sizes and of different colours and splendour were seen by him very frequently when writing a certain work (*The Animal Kingdom*), and these he regarded as "so many attestations of the truth of what he was writing." In that work there are several references to "admonitions heard" and "commands to write," also a *representation* of "a golden key which was to open the door to spiritual things," and of "things foretold to him."

It was while he was engaged writing and publishing his *Animal Kingdom* that he was undergoing these strange experiences, and the reader is presented with the extraordinary instance of a man of a severely logical and mathematical training, calmly composing a ponderous scientific work, travelling to London to print it, correcting the proof sheets, and otherwise behaving like an ordinary great man, although at the same time he was jotting down in a note book, sundry dreams, visions, temptations and trials, which some critics—who certainly must belong to the “run and read” style of judgment—have written down as evidences of delusions. Surely this is a libel against mathematical and scientific training, nor is it the mode in which delusions generally announce themselves. Let us turn for a brief moment to this “dream book.” Nothing was known of its existence until the death of one Professor Scheringsson, in 1849, when it was offered for sale by his heirs, purchased by Mr. Klemming, the librarian of the Stockholm Royal Library, and published in 1859. The character of some of the entries are of the most private nature, and the whole bears evidence of never having been intended for any but the writer’s own eye. Such being the case, if criticised at all, common fairness would suggest

that the criticism be lenient, or at least honest. Yet we find that some of Swedenborg's detractors have fastened on this book with a hunger that hardly bespeaks unprejudiced judgment, or dispassionate review. They forget that if they had noted down *their* temptations, trials and dreams, the judgment of their critics would have been unpleasant to hear! One might as well be hung for a rogue at once as adjudged a madman by a dream-book, the more especially if one be perfectly *compos mentis* when awake. Space forbids anything like full quotation; we, however, give a specimen of one of the most remarkable visions which occurred on Easter Monday, 1744. On the previous day he had partaken of the Lord's Supper, and was in a state of deep religious happiness. This was followed by a severe temptation, which was, however, "soon removed by prayer and the Word of God." A state of ecstatic bliss again succeeds, and he writes, "in one word, I was in heaven and heard speech that no tongue can utter." This bliss continued throughout that night and the next day till the following night, when he was terrified by a great noise, trembling from head to foot, and was, he relates, ultimately thrown prostrate on the ground, yet still retaining his full consciousness. The note then proceeds, "I spoke as if

awake, but felt that these words were put into my mouth, 'Thou Almighty Jesus Christ, who by Thy great mercy deigns to come to so great a sinner, make me worthy of Thy grace.' I kept my hands together in prayer, and then a hand came forward and firmly pressed mine. I continued my prayer, saying, 'Thou hast promised to have mercy upon all sinners, Thou canst not but keep Thy word.' At that moment I sat in His bosom and saw Him face to face. It was a face of holy mien, and altogether indescribable, and He smiled so that I believe His face had indeed been like this when He lived on earth." Swedenborg then proceeds to analyse this vision and test its impressions and its reality, and he says, "I found that I had been purified, soothed and protected the whole night by the Holy Spirit, and thus prepared so far," and he concluded the vision was real.

We are not prejudiced either for or against Swedenborg. It is the purpose of this sketch to describe, not to discuss; to narrate, not to advocate his claims and opinions. Yet we feel bound to say here, that it needs far more credulity to believe this gifted man was under mental aberration at this time, than to believe the reverse. Paxton Hood, who strongly scouts the idea of mental aberration or imposture,

truly observes that whatever Swedenborg might have been, he was never inconsistent, and it is when this dream book is regarded *as a whole* that we get to see Swedenborg's real position. At this time he was evidently in a transition state similar to that through which every Christian must pass who would gain the kingdom of heaven. One cannot help feeling a reverent sympathy for this good man in these strong and strange struggles against his imperfections. "One touch of nature makes the whole world kin." A common experience testifies that this life is, or should be, a pilgrim's progress—forty years' wanderings in a wilderness, and whether we get to heaven, as Swedenborg says he did, by intromission and the opening of spiritual sight while yet in this world, or have to wait the summons of death before we cross its threshold, the process is similar, the purification equally necessary, the states of transition chequered and strange. The difference between Swedenborg's and common experiences is a difference of degree, and also of record. It seems to us less a marvel that he should have suffered these experiences, than that he should have kept a record of them, a record so exact and minute, so honestly and candidly prepared, that it seems more

like an account kept with conscience than anything else. Had he *continued* in this state of trial and transition it might have been possible to entertain the charge of madness flung against him, but the fact that he quickly passed through it and recovered all his original mental vigour and acumen tells enormously in his favour—only a superficial judgment could contrariwise regard it.

In May, 1744, we find Swedenborg again in England, lodging in the house of a Mr. Brockmer, in Fetter-lane. On the 20th May he attended and partook of the Lord's Supper at the Swedish Church (Princes-square, near the Tower). He also visited the Moravian Meeting House in Fetter-lane, became acquainted with several of the Moravian brethren, whom he then held in esteem, and, according to Brockmer, went every Sunday to their church. He stayed but a short time—a few weeks—with Brockmer, from whose house he removed to that of Mr. Michael Caer, a wig maker, in Warner-street, Coldbath-fields. As to his doings in London at this time, little definite information exists. Evidently his purpose was to publish part III. of his *Regnum Animale* and *De Cultu et Amore Dei*, which he now issued through the agency of Nourse, a London bookseller. In the latter part of 1745 he returned to Sweden, and

remained at Stockholm until 1747. This period he spent in assiduously studying Hebrew, in reading the Bible through and through in that language, preparing a most elaborate concordance of texts, and committing to paper his first perceptions of "the spiritual sense of the Word," in a work entitled the *Adversaria*. This he never intended to publish, and his later experiences modified considerably many of its views, but the work has been printed in nine large vols. 8vo., all compiled within two years!

Meantime he was also carefully noting down in a "Spiritual Diary" the events and scenes he witnessed in states of vision, the persons he saw and conversed with, what they said and did. This "Itinerarium" of his other-world travels, which he continued to keep till 1764, is full of the most astonishing statements. Like the "Dream-book," it was not intended for publication. Swedenborg seemed to have used it as a note-book, and now and again he transferred some of these notes into his theological works, under the heading of "Memorable Relations." The *Diarium Spirituale* was, however, edited and published by Dr. I. F. E. Tafel, in 1844-59, in twelve large vols.

Whether Swedenborg actually saw and heard the scenes and conversations he notes in this book is a question only to be



settled by an extensive examination of the internal and external evidence he offered in proof. He firmly believed it himself, and that he might devote himself entirely to his new vocation, he petitioned King Frederick of Sweden to be allowed to retire from his assessorship with half salary as a pension, requesting that no further elevation of rank or title might be granted him. His retirement was sanctioned, but, in consideration of his eminent services during more than thirty years, his full salary was continued to him—its amount in sterling being about £150!

Now he settles calmly down, at the age of 58, to prosecute his new studies with all the ardour, energy, and scientific method of his early life. Whoever else might doubt the authenticity of his mission, he certainly did not. He calmly iterates and reiterates from this time down to the very moment of his death the remarkable statement—that the second coming of the Lord would not be a personal coming, but a descent through the clouds obscuring the letter of the Word, and that He, the Lord, would “establish the New Church, which is the New Jerusalem, by the instrumentality of a man who is able not only to receive the doctrines of the Church in his understanding *but also to make them known by the Press.* That the Lord manifested Him-

self before me, His servant, that He appointed me to this office and afterwards opened the sight of my spirit, and so let me into the spiritual world, permitting me to see the heavens and the hells, and also to converse with angels and spirits, and this now continually for many years, I attest in truth; and further that from the first day of my call to this office, *I have never received anything relating to the doctrines of that Church from any angel, but from the Lord alone, while I was reading the Word.*" The italics are ours. What can be said of such a claim as this? Paxton Hood devotes many brilliant pages of his *Biography and Exposition* to a luminous exposition of the question whether the claim is admissible, in which he leads us to the conclusion that Swedenborg was indeed a seer, that the claim is admissible, and that the charge of madness is the offspring of ignorance and misconception. He even overthrows the term mystic, and says "the life of the mystic is in speculation, the life of the apostle is in use. We shall number Swedenborg not with the mystics but with the apostles . . . All his studies and writings were directed to the useful, his energy was immense, his activity, mental and bodily, indomitable. He was an apostle. . . . The charge of insanity is one very easily levelled against a

character whose movements we do not clearly understand. We know against whom the words were used 'He hath a devil and is mad.' And to an illustrious reasoner it was once said, 'Paul, Paul, thou art beside thyself; much learning hath made thee mad.'" Again, he says there are very few that are sane, for *sin is insanity*, and few are free from sin. "But if we look at Swedenborg's career, we find all his life balanced and harmonised. If ever there lived a man who might claim to present to the world a completed being, he was the man," and Paxton Hood with equal vigour disposes of the charges of "impostor" and "fanatic."

S. T. Coleridge, in his *Literary Remains*, says he had often thought of writing a "vindication of great men unjustly branded," in which he would have dealt with Swedenborg. "I can venture to assert," says he, "that *as a moralist Swedenborg is above all praise*, and that as a naturalist, psychologist, and theologian, he has strong and varied claims on the gratitude and admiration of the professional and philosophical faculties."

Nor does Emerson ridicule the claim. He observes, "Swedenborg styles himself on the title page of his books 'Servant of the Lord Jesus Christ,' and by force of intellect he is *the last father in the Church*, and is not likely to have a successor. No

wonder that his depth of ethical wisdom should give him influence as a teacher." Still stronger, because from a quarter least expected is the testimony of the Rev. Professor Gærres, a Roman Catholic. "Swedenborg was not a man to be carried away by an unbridled imagination, *still less did he ever manifest during his whole life the slightest symptom of mental aberration.* . . . On the other hand he was in life and disposition so blameless that no man dare even intimate any suspicion of concerted deception, and posterity have no right to call into question the unsuspected testimony of those who lived in the same age as Swedenborg, and who knew him well. . . . If it be permitted to say of a man to whose veracity, intelligence, science, irreproachable conduct, presence of mind, and fidelity to truth his contemporaries bear testimony, that he had either imprudently deceived himself and the world, or had knowingly dealt in mere falsehood and lies, there is an end to the verification of historical events—historical evidence even the holiest and most venerable might be reduced to nothing. . . . There nowhere appears in the writings of Swedenborg a self-destroying contradiction, nothing abrupt, disjointed, unconnected, or arbitrary, or illogical . . . but everything he writes is so connected and uninterrupted as to present a perfect whole."

Tenneman, author of *A Manual of the History of Philosophy*, says, "In vain will you ransack the archives of his family or personal history for a trace of insanity. Equally fruitless will be your endeavour to trace any symptoms of incoherence or raving in his methodical pages." And the Chevalier de Sandel, a Swedish nobleman of high culture and rank, shortly after Swedenborg's death eulogised him strongly in a long oration addressed to the Royal Academy of Sciences, Stockholm. After, with becoming modesty, detailing his difficulty in delineating the proportions of "so vast and sublime a genius," who "never strayed from sound morals and true piety," who had "a strong memory, a quick perception, and an excellent heart," M. Sandel says, "Never did he allow himself to have recourse to dissimulation. He was the sincere friend of mankind. As a public functionary he was upright and just; while he discharged his duties with great exactness, he neglected nothing but his own advancement. He enjoyed excellent health, *having scarcely ever experienced the slightest indisposition*. Content within himself and with his situation, his life was in all respects one of the happiest that ever fell to the lot of man, till the very moment of its close." Perhaps the secret of this happiness was adherence to the following

"rules of life" framed by Swedenborg, and which M. Sandel found among his papers : —" 1. Often to read and meditate on the Word of God. 2. To submit everything to the will of Divine Providence. 3. To observe in everything a propriety of behaviour and always to keep the conscience clear. 4. To discharge with fidelity the duties of his office, and to render himself in all things useful to society."

The whole of the foregoing testimonies to Swedenborg's physical, intellectual and moral health are from impartial witnesses well capable of judging, and by no means Swedenborgians. The list might be almost indefinitely extended, and, indeed, after having heard so much said against the Swedish seer, we are surprised to find after examining a large number of biographies and other works, that the whole outcry is based upon one or two improbable tales, combined with the usual prejudice against such a claim as he presents. One of the chief anecdotes alluded to is related with much detail and some flippancy in White's biography. It appears that in 1766 the Rev. Aron Mathesius, a Swedish clergyman, came to London as minister of the Swedish Chapel in Prince's-square, E. Mathesius was acquainted with Swedenborg by hearsay only, had read none of his works, but had yet conceived and avowed

himself bitterly opposed to him. Brockmer (with whom Swedenborg resided for a few weeks in 1744) still lived in Fetter-lane, and Mathesius seems to have accidentally or designedly met him, and drawn from him a series of extraordinary statements as to Swedenborg's doings, which are briefly as follows:—That in the year 1743, while lodging in Brockmer's house, Swedenborg was seized with a fever and delirium, during which he declared to Brockmer he was the Messiah come to be crucified for the Jews, that Brockmer saw a Dr. Smith of Coldbath-fields on the case, and while he was gone Swedenborg called upon the Swedish envoy, but it being post day he was not admitted, and departing thence, we are told, he pulled off his garments and rolled himself in the muddy gutter, distributing the money he had in his pockets to the crowd. In this plight he was, it is said, found by some of the envoy's footmen who knew him and took him home. Brockmer then found apartments for him in the house of Mr. Caer, already mentioned, where he was placed under a doctor's care and guarded by six keepers; that after a time he got better and only one keeper was sufficient, but the derangement is stated to have continued for some time. This is a story surrounded with every ap-

pearance of truth, plenty of witnesses, plenty of detail and circumstance. It would yet have died a natural death if John Wesley had not got hold of it, and, forty years after the supposed occurrence, published a long account of it in the *Arminian Magazine* (1781), as having been supplied to him by Mathesius and confirmed by Brockmer. Wesley was a contemporary of Swedenborg, and, we shall see later on, firmly believed in him until he found that his own followers began to believe too. This insubordination Wesley could not brook, and desiring to counteract it he was too easily induced to lend himself to a pious fraud. Paxton Hood, amongst others, expresses surprise and regret that Wesley, "the most credulous of incredulous men," should have "published this sad slander." . . . "Wesley had said of Swedenborg, 'We may now burn all our books of theology. God has sent us a teacher from heaven, and in the writings of Swedenborg we may learn all that is necessary for us to know.'" . . . "But the charge of madness," continues Mr. Hood, "lies in a very small space; it is certain that the doctrines of Swedenborg had made some way in the young Methodist society, and we know how promptly Mr. Wesley interfered to prevent any idea spreading likely to turn the



minds of his members from the simple rules of the Wesleyan Church."

, But Wesley's publication of the slander in daylight secured its refutation. One of the few who credited Swedenborg's mission at this date was one Robert Hindmarsh, of Clerkenwell-close, printer extraordinary to the Prince of Wales, &c. In an able *Vindication of Swedenborg*, Hindmarsh states that in 1783 he sought and found Brockmer, and in the presence of three highly respectable witnesses read the tale from the *Arminian Magazine* in detail, and questioned him closely as to the truth of the whole story. Brockmer, without hesitation, denied positively that he had ever given such an account about Swedenborg to Mr. Wesley or any one else, and said, "Swedenborg was never afflicted with any illness, much less with a violent fever, while at my house, nor did he act at all as Mr. Wesley has unjustly represented." Brockmer was displeased at Wesley's making use of his name as an authority for the slander, and says, "It is well known that Mr. Wesley is a very credulous man, and easily to be imposed upon by any idle tale, from whatever quarter it may come." Rather curiously, Mathesius soon after this, became a lunatic and remained so for nine years. - Putting Brockmer's denial, Mathesius's malevolence,

Wesley's credulity, the length of time that had elapsed, and the fact that Swedenborg was *not in London at all* at the date named (1743), together, and adding thereto the weight of testimony adduced as to Swedenborg's continual good health and soundness, the chain of evidence seems exceedingly rotten !

Another tale is told by M. Robsahm, a banker of Stockholm, and he declares he heard it from Swedenborg himself. According to this, Swedenborg was dining at an inn in London about April, 1745, and being hungry ate with great appetite. As he was completing his repast, he had a vision, in which the spiritual state of those who indulge in the pleasures and luxuries of the table was represented to him as a surrounding of creeping reptiles and vermin, and a "man" sitting in the corner of the room said, "Eat not so much !" Swedenborg was somewhat startled, but when the vision had ceased he thought over the matter attentively, yet could find no *physical cause* for it, and as he was a vegetarian, and generally, we find, took bread and milk for supper, it is very probable that Robsahm has confounded Swedenborg's statement to him with a note in the diary of a similar nature, but which has no apparent personal reference to Swedenborg. Robsahm adds that on the

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following night the "man" or angel again appeared to the seer and declared himself to be God, come to dictate to Swedenborg the internal sense of Scripture. This part of the story is not corroborated.

Mr. Lindsey, the Unitarian, relates a curious anecdote of Swedenborg, which, however, comes from him at third hand. A friend of a friend of Mr. Lindsey's, it is said, was walking down Cheapside with Swedenborg, when the seer suddenly bowed low to some invisible object, and said to his companion, "That was Moses; did *you* not see him pass?" The last words show that the tale is invented; it has no confirmation, and is diametrically opposed to Swedenborg's constant statement that a spirit or angel, if seen at all, could not be seen with the ordinary eyes. Southey, in his *Common-place Book*, gives a similar tale, but this time it is about St. Paul and not Moses, and again we find it is unsupported. It is not to be wondered at that idle tales should spring up concerning such a man as Swedenborg, and therefore one may reasonably hesitate to admit their credibility without some trustworthy evidence. No fair estimate of so extraordinary a genius could be otherwise formed.

The hypotheses by which Swedenborg explains his seership merit brief state-

ment. He declares that the soul is the real man, the body being merely a temporary tenement, husk, or chrysalis for use in a disciplinary world. The body is formed from the soul, receives all its (apparent) life and vigour from it, and all the bodily senses and faculties have their rise and seat in the soul, which is entirely distinct from the body—in the body, but not of it. We live, says Swedenborg, at the same time in two worlds—the natural, in which we are visible to our fellows, and the world of spirits (an intermediate state between heaven and hell), in which man's soul, or "spiritual body," is conjoined to angels or spirits. Some of these are associated with every man, and remain as guardians or as tempters so long as the man pleases to allow. They are not permitted, however, to speak with man, but the ideas and thoughts which "strike" us and seem as if self-originated flow, says Swedenborg, from angelic sources. The Lord, by means of angelic ministrations, in this way sustains, guards, feeds, protects, and vivifies the souls of all who turn their faces Zionward, and overrules the actions of the wicked for good.

In the Swedenborgian view, man is created to become an angel of heaven, and is placed in this world as a seed is sown in the earth. Invisible influences operate

upon the internal constitution of the seedling, causing it to germinate, to seek "more light"—to push its way out of dark naturalism and blind self-hood into "the glorious liberty of the children of light." It forces its way above earth, puts out a sprout here and a bud there, and, in course of time, is fit to be transplanted to its future home: the separation is death, not a curse, says Swedenborg, but a blessing; and the resurrection is immediate—the plant never more returns to its seed-bed. The doctrine of man's proximity to angels and spirits, and, under certain conditions, his ability to see them, Swedenborg powerfully supports by citing the biblical records of seership and spiritual sight, and he maintains that just as the spiritual eyes of Elisha, Daniel, Paul or John were opened, and they saw by divine favour the inhabitants, scenery, and certain phenomena in the world of spirits, so were his eyes opened. Paxton Hood, in the course of an exhaustive defence of Swedenborg, adduces some opposite illustrations and arguments, which, but for limited space, we would quote at length. "The eye," he says, "is the window of the soul, through which it looks out into nature," and if bright and clean enough may see *super-nature*. "There is a spiritual eye by which man may see beyond clothing and deadness;

it beholds a new heaven and a new earth, new glories and new beauties ;" and in reference to prevalent scepticism on the subject, he remarks, " There appears to be a balancing of reason against the sceptic ;" and again, " Scripture is built on the assumption that man possesses a spiritual nature, and that spiritual communications may be made to it. Whether man's eyes may now be opened or not to perceive spiritual realities, it is certain men's eyes have been so opened ; the spiritual world has been unveiled, and its furniture and its inhabitants stood revealed to the eye. Scripture does not leave us in doubt as to the nature of the scenery of the land, and our associations with it arise from the descriptions of the men who have travelled thither." . . . " When the disciples met the Lord on their journey to Emmaus, their eyes were holden that they should not know Him, but afterwards it is said, ' their eyes were opened and they knew Him.' . . . And again, when the servant of Elisha was greatly alarmed because the king of Syria sent to take his master, Elisha prayed and said, ' Lord open his eyes that he may see.' " (He could see the Syrians well enough.) " And the Lord opened the eyes of the young man and he saw and behold the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire

round about Elisha." But there is a distinction between the Swedish seer and the inspired seers : a distinction not of quality, perhaps, but of office. They wrote from dictation and had no choice of words ; he reports observations in his own language and style. Swedenborg was not a prophet, or an inspired writer ; his revelations must be received or rejected on their merits, with no other penalty attached to the dismissal than that which is always appended to a wilful rejection of the truth once known and understood. In all men there is the faculty of spiritual sight, though the range is limited by capacity and culture, and the application impeded by the "cares of the world." But between Saul the wizard-seeker, or his modern imitators, and the Seer by divine permission, there is a vast distinction. Swedenborgianism and Spiritism, often associated together in the public mind, have, we understand, nothing whatever in common. Quite the reverse ; they are essentially antagonistic. Swedenborg exposes, with a skilful and unsparing hand, the abominations and deceptions of carnal-minded spirits ; predicts in 1756 that an irruption of disorderly spirits would take place, and thence the practice of spirit-seeking would spring up ; declares and explains the possibility and the evil of such intercourse, and fore-

warns his readers against it. More than ninety years after, spirit manifestations commenced in an out-of-the-way corner of America, and have since spread like a plague over that land and the greater part of the civilised world. Swedenborg himself, in the early time of his seership, was deceived by artful and designing spirits, and hence in stating his claim he is, as we have seen, careful to say that he received no doctrine from any angel or spirit, but from the Lord alone, and it is only those of his writings which he himself published that are endowed with any doctrinal authority. A remarkable instance of the necessity for such caution may be cited. In the *Spiritual Diary*, one of the non-doctrinal works referred to, there are sundry notes of conversations with numerous celebrities of all time, in which King David and St. Paul are placed among the lost, and George II. and Louis XIV. among the blessed! This inversion of the popular estimation in which these men are held is only explicable upon Swedenborg's declaration, that "evil spirits not only pretend but fancy they are great personages which they are not, for *all devils are insane*;" and he testifies that he was frequently deceived by them until he became more fully enlightened. His relations as to David, Paul, &c., occurring in the early times of his



seership, may have been instances of this deception.

But one other point in Swedenborg's claim remains to be referred to, and that is his divine appointment. With such a question we are unable to deal. Only by trying on the shoe will its fitness be tested ; only by internal evidence can such a claim be proved. It is pretty obvious that sacred and profane history are on the side of Swedenborg. Paxton Hood says, "When the Lord requires a man for any work, be sure He educates him for that work." Abraham, Moses, Daniel, John the Baptist, Paul, Luther, and many others have been "called," and there is not a clergyman in the Established Church who has not affirmed that he is "called to the high dignity and weighty office and charge of messenger, watchman, and steward of the Lord." Why not Swedenborg?

Often challenged as to the validity of his claims, Swedenborg sometimes furnished proofs of seership, some of which we shall cite later on, but more frequently he urged that his works might be read without prejudice and they would speak for themselves. The fact that he supplies no miraculous evidence can hardly militate against a claim which appeals to the reason and judgment, since miracles may confuse but do not convince. Thus he

escaped becoming a nine days' wonder, and is himself a miracle—the wonder of the age.

Prior to this long digression, we left Swedenborg sitting down to pen his first theological work. This, *The Arcana Cœlestia*, he published anonymously in London through the agency of John Lewis, bookseller, Paternoster-row. The work was issued in eight volumes, published at intervals in 1749-56. The first volume, in Latin, was sold at six shillings, unbound, and does not seem to have attracted many readers. The second volume was published in English and Latin, and sold at the extraordinary price of eightpence. Lewis advertised the book in the *General Advertiser* in 1749-50, and also wrote an interesting pamphlet, recommending its perusal, from which we extract the following :—  
“This gentleman (Swedenborg), with indefatigable pains and labour, spent one whole year in studying and writing out the first volume of the *Arcana*, was at the expense of £200 to print it, and advanced £200 more for the printing of the second, and when he had done this he gave express orders that all the money that should arise from the sale should be given towards the charge of the propagation of the Gospel. He is so far from desiring to make a gain of his labours that he will not receive one

farthing back of the £400 he hath expended ; and for that reason his works will come exceedingly cheap to the public." The book was advertised for sale "by Mr. Nourse, at 'the Lamb,' opposite Catherine-street, Strand; Mr. Ware, at 'the Bible,' on Ludgate-hill ; and by John Lewis." The *Arcana* does not seem to have been bought up briskly ; the age, probably, was not open to receive it kindly, and the remaining volumes were published unostentatiously. Such a work as the *Arcana Cælestia* defies brief description ; we can only indicate a few leading points and pass on. As issued by the Swedenborg Society the *Arcana Cælestia* is published in twelve volumes, 8vo. It was translated from the Latin by the late Rev. John Clowes, of St. John's Church, Manchester. This work is an exposition of the "spiritual and divine meaning" contained in every *word* of Genesis and Exodus, but as Swedenborg culls from any and every part of the Bible many thousands of illustrative passages (the index of which alone occupies eighty-six pages), it may almost be styled an exposition of the whole of the Bible. It is divided into numbered paragraphs, of which there are 10,839, some occupying a page or two, others only a few lines. To every chapter is appended graphic descriptions of "things seen and heard in the spiritual

world," given to illustrate and enforce the doctrines enunciated. Swedenborg's interpretation of Scripture is based on the Science of Correspondences, or of the relationship between Creator and creature, cause and effect, spirit and matter, Bible and nature. God, the only self-subsisting substance, is creator of all things—not out of nothing, but by emanation from Himself, and all things by their correspondence with Him are perpetually sustained and preserved. A knowledge of the Science of Correspondences, therefore, is a key to all sciences, and, using this key, Swedenborg discerns that the natural world is the out-birth of the spiritual world, that man is a summary of nature, and nature is man in diffusion, that, indeed, the universe is, as it were, in the sight of God as a Grand Man. All things in nature, in fire, air, earth, and water, every beast, bird, fish, insect, reptile, tree, herb, fruit and flower represent "principles" in the human soul. The Bible is written according to this science throughout. The first eleven chapters of Genesis are purely allegorical. Adam represents the first or primitive state of the Church; the six days of creation signify the stages of Christian growth and Church development; the seventh day of rest in the garden of Eden symbolises a celestial state of innocence with which the infantile

church commenced its career. The temptation by the serpent, self-hood, typifies man's first leanings to self and the commencement of his declension. The deluge signifies the judgment and consummation of that state of the Church, and Noah and the ark represent a new and spiritual state. This in its turn comes to an end, and out of its ruins the Hebrew Church is raised—a state of natural religion and obedience. This age also came to an end, and mankind fell so low that no ground remained upon which a church could rest, and in order to preserve the connection between God and man (without which, says Swedenborg, man would irretrievably perish) the representative or type of a church was established amongst the Jews suitable to their low condition; and because the Word of God could no longer be received theoretically, it was reduced to writing, but so arranged as that, while literally true and able to guide the natural and carnal as to doctrine, in its spirit and life it could be studied by angels and by the men of the future Church. Thus, Swedenborg alleges, the lives of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Pharaoh, Aaron, the kings, judges, and prophets of Israel, the Jewish pilgrimage, wars, and captivities, &c., &c., refer in the spiritual sense to the upward progress of every human soul, and also in a divine

sense to the successive manifestations and mediatorial operations of Divine Truth, until in the fulness of time, when humanity was spiritually dead, Jehovah Himself descended, assumed human nature with all its propensities to evil, yet without sin, and, as Jesus Christ, conquered spiritual death, subdued infernal powers, redeemed mankind from their slavery, established a new and living way between God and man, and glorified Humanity by uniting it with Divinity. The Church established by the apostles, Swedenborg says, was consummated in the year 1757, and from that date the Lord began to establish the New Jerusalem referred to in the Revelation, which Swedenborg affirms was effected through his instrumentality. But the *Arcana Cœlestia* defies criticism ; it must be read to be appreciated, and we must pass on to other matter.

Where Swedenborg was between 1749-56, while writing and publishing the *Arcana Cœlestia* is uncertain. It is believed he passed a good portion of the time in London, and White thinks he lodged in the neighbourhood of his printer, Mr. Hart, of Poppin's Court, Fleet Street, of whose company he was fond, and where he used to spend his evenings. As to his further relations with Lewis, the publisher, there is also no account ; it is recorded that Mrs.

Lewis "thought Swedenborg a good and sensible man, but too apt to spiritualise things"—truly a woman's judgment of a spirit-seer! In 1758, he comes to London again and publishes several works, which we shall presently advert to. At this time, he notes in his diary that "the better sort of English are the centre of all Christians, in consequence of possessing an interior intellectual light which they derive from the liberty of speaking and writing, and thence of thinking. There is among them such a similitude of disposition that they club together and seldom seek other company. They are kind in relieving each other's necessities, and they love sincerity. They love their country, and are zealous for its glory"—but "politics so engross their attention that they neglect the sublimer studies which conduce to superior intelligence."

Swedenborg left London for Stockholm in the summer of 1759. At this time three most remarkable proofs of the reality of his visions were afforded, and are worth brief narration. The celebrated logician, Immanuel Kant, says that, "On Saturday (19th July, 1759), at four o'clock in the afternoon, when Swedenborg arrived at Gottenburg, from England, Mr. W. Castel invited him to his house, with a party of fifteen persons. About six o'clock Swedenborg went

out, and after a short interval returned to the company quite pale and alarmed. He said that a dangerous fire had just broken out in Stockholm, at the Södermalm (Gottenburg is 300 miles from Stockholm), and that it was spreading very fast. He was restless and went out often. He said that the house of one of his friends, whom he named, was already in ashes, and that his own was in danger. At eight o'clock, after he had been out again he joyfully exclaimed, 'Thank God, the fire is extinguished—the third door from my house.' Naturally this news caused great commotion. Coming to the governor's ears, he sent for Swedenborg and questioned him. He described the fire precisely, how it had begun, in what manner it had ceased, and how long it had continued. . . . On Monday evening a messenger arrived at Gottenburg (who had been despatched from Stockholm whilst the fire was raging). In the letters brought by him the fire was described precisely as by Swedenborg." Kant heartily believed in this story which he states was carefully investigated, and to which "the greater part of the inhabitants" of Stockholm and Gottenburg were testifying witnesses.

Swedenborg's house was, as may be readily imagined, soon beset with curious ones in quest of wonders. Amongst



these was a Madame Marteville, widow of the Dutch ambassador to Sweden. It appears she was being sued for 25,000 guilders, which she knew her husband had paid, but could nowhere find the receipt. The narrative comes direct from the second husband, and he is confirmed by Kant. The relator describes the visit of his wife to Swedenborg, in company with several other ladies, whom Swedenborg received in "a very beautiful garden," furnished with an elegant summer house. The matter of the missing receipt was explained to Swedenborg, and "on entreaty" he promised that if he should meet with Marteville (whom he knew by repute only) in the spiritual world, he would make the enquiry. "Eight days after," says the narrator, "Marteville appeared to my wife in a dream, and mentioned to her a secret place in his English cabinet, where she would find not only the receipt but also a hair-pin set with twenty brilliants, which had been given up as lost. This happened about 2 o'clock, and full of joy my wife rose and found them in the place designated. She returned to bed, and slept till 9 o'clock. About 11 a.m. Swedenborg was announced. His first remark, before my wife had time to speak, was that he had seen several spirits during the preceding night, and amongst others Marteville. He wished to

talk with him, but Marteville excused himself on the plea *that he must go and discover something of importance to his wife*. This is the true account of the affair in which my wife was concerned." The occurrence just referred to happened in 1761, and in the same year the Queen of Sweden, partly excited by having (doubtless) heard of the Marteville affair, and partly by enquiries made by her sister (Duchess of Brunswick) respecting Swedenborg, was persuaded to indulge her curiosity by a conversation with him. The following is abridged from a well authenticated account by a courtier, Captain Stahlhammer, dated 13th May, 1788. "A short time after the death of the Prince of Prussia Swedenborg came to Court, where he was in the habit of attending regularly. As soon as the Queen saw him, she said, 'Well, Mr. Assessor, have you seen my brother?' Swedenborg answered that he had not, whereon she replied, 'If you should see him remember me to him.' In saying this *she did but jest*. Eight days after Swedenborg came again to Court, but so early that the Queen had not left her apartment, called 'the white room,' where she was conversing with her maids of honour and other ladies of the Court. Swedenborg did not wait for the Queen's coming out, but passed directly into the white room, and whispered in her

ear. The Queen, struck with astonishment, was taken ill, and did not recover herself for some time. After she had come to herself she said to those about her, '*There is only God and my brother who can know what he has just told me.*'" Stahlhammer goes on to give his opinion of Swedenborg, which is worth quoting. "The only weakness of this *truly honest* man was his belief in the apparition of spirits, but I knew him for many years, and I can confidently affirm that he was as fully persuaded of his intercourse with spirits, as I am that I am writing at this moment. *As a citizen and as a friend he was a man of the greatest integrity, abhorring imposture and leading an exemplary life.*" "There are not," observes White, "perhaps, in literature, three better attested narratives of the supernatural than these. . . . nevertheless if you are not disposed to believe, says our wise author, you never will believe."

Kant, the sceptic, and Swedenborg, the seer, were contemporaries, and of the latter's relations with Kant much interesting information is given in Borowski's *Life and Character of I. Kant*. It appears that an eminent lady named Knobloch wrote to Kant for his opinion respecting Swedenborg. In replying he speaks of the necessity of a thorough and careful

inquisition, lest he should be charged with credulity ; he "always considered it a rule of sound reason to *incline to disbelief*" and so on. But when he became informed concerning the incidents just narrated—the information being too authentic to discredit—he at once set about a careful inquiry. First he wrote direct to Swedenborg on the subject, to which he received no reply. He then commissioned a friend in Stockholm to make personal inquiries. The friend, himself at first incredulous, became after an interview with Swedenborg of another opinion, and stated that "he is a reasonable, polite, and open-hearted man ; he is also a man of learning." Swedenborg promised to deal with Kant's communications in a work to be published shortly afterwards, and it seems probable that the work in question was that *On the Intercourse Between the Soul and Body*, published in London in 1769, but as to this there is no reliable information. In 1766 Kant issued a pamphlet, entitled *Dreams of a Spirit Seer Interpreted by Dreams of Metaphysics*, in which he says, "the system of Swedenborg is *unfortunately* very similar to my own philosophy. It is not impossible that my rational views may be considered absurd by reason of that affinity. As to the offensive comparison, I declare we must either suppose greater intelligence and

truth at the basis of Swedenborg's writings than first impressions excite, or that it is a mere accident when he coincides with my system." No doubt Kant must have felt greatly annoyed at this anticipation of his views in such a manner, but he set to reading Swedenborg for himself, and, unfortunately, instead of beginning with one of the more philosophical or introductory works, he read through the *Arcana Cœlestia*, which he bought for £7. An exposition of the sacred Scriptures according to their spiritual sense was hardly the sort of stuff to satisfy such a hard-headed sceptic as Kant, who, approaching the work as that of a supposed rival in philosophy, and, moreover, with an "inclination to disbelieve," it is not to be wondered at if his criticism abounds with ridicule and sarcasm. John Benedict von Scherer, in his time a professor at Tübingen and a distinguished public man in Germany, testifies to the following test put to Swedenborg's seership:—"A company, after listening one evening with rapt attention to a description of the world of spirits, put Swedenborg to this test, 'Which of those present would die first?' Swedenborg did not refuse the test, but sat for a time in profound meditation. At last he spoke. 'Olof Olofsohn will die to-morrow morning at forty-five minutes past four o'clock.'

The test was met, but not offensively as it would have been had one of his auditors been named. Next morning one of the party went to the house of Olofsohn to see if the prediction was fulfilled. On the way he met Olofsohn's servant, who told him his master was dead of apoplexy. Strange to say, the clock in Olofsohn's house had stopped at 4.45—the minute at which he expired." But to return to 1758, in which year Swedenborg published in London the following works:—*Heaven and Hell, A Relation of Things Heard and Seen, The Earths in Our Solar System, The Last Judgment and Destruction of Babylon, The New Jerusalem and its Heavenly Doctrine,* and *The White Horse of the Apocalypse.* All these he printed and published at his own expense, and presented sets of them to the whole of the English bishops, and to many of the nobility, clergy, &c.

Swedenborg is pre-eminently a teacher on the subject of the life after death to those who admit his seership, and in this position he has no compeer. Hence the work *Heaven and Hell*, apart from its intrinsic merits, has, from the interest which is inseparably connected with the subject, been one of the most widely read of the seer's publications. Since its issue in 1758 religious dogma has undergone many wonderful changes. Some of Swedenborg's

most remarkable doctrines have received pretty general assent, and many most popular divines, though very probably unconsciously, have electrified their audiences by their enunciation of opinions as to the future state which Swedenborg had long before uttered. Indeed we find an American publisher goes so far as to state, says the *Literary World*, that "a very large number of the clergy of the Church of the broad school in England are in earnest sympathy with the views and theology of Swedenborg!" This may or may not be a fact; we cannot judge. Just as in his scientific works he forestalled scientific knowledge, so his theological opinions seem to be a century or more before the age—a provision for a new era.

Had *Heaven and Hell* been put forward, like Dante's *Inferno* or Milton's *Paradise Lost*, as a speculation upon the future state, it would have far eclipsed those works in popularity, despite the cumbrous prose in which it is penned. But Swedenborg was in earnest; he writes as if there were no such being as a "critic," and pursues his course heedless of what "Mrs. Grundy" may say. Unquestionably there is something about his works that checks mere criticism, and voluminous and diffuse as he appears, it is a difficult task to condense, far easier to dilate upon what he

says. In merely giving, therefore, a few of the leading features of this work we shall best satisfy the object of this sketch. *Heaven and Hell* was translated originally by the Rev. T. Hartley, of Winwick, an early reader and a staunch friend of Swedenborg's. Since then it has been translated into many languages, and various cheap editions have been issued in England and abroad.

The work is in three parts :—the first on "Heaven," the second on "The Intermediate State," and the last on "Hell." In an introductory chapter Swedenborg has the following :—"The man of the Church at this day has scarcely any knowledge of heaven and hell or of his life after death, although they are all plainly described in the Word ; indeed, many who are born within the Church deny these things, and say in their hearts, 'Who has ever come from thence to tell us?' Lest, therefore, such a secret denial . . . should also corrupt and infect the simple in heart and the simple in faith, it has been permitted me for thirteen years to associate with angels, and to converse with them as one man with another, and to see the things which are in the heavens as well as those which are in the hells, and to describe them from experience in the hope that ignorance may be enlightened and incredulity dissipated.



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Such an immediate revelation is now made because this is what is meant by the coming of the Lord."

The Lord Jesus Christ in His glorified humanity, Swedenborg states, is the only God worshipped in the heavens, of which there are three, divided not arbitrarily but according to the qualities of the angels. The angels of the first heaven are principled in the love of the Lord and the neighbour from obedience, the hope of reward, natural goodness, and such like minor virtues. Those of the spiritual or second heaven are angels of light—truth is their ruler and wisdom their chief characteristic. But the angels of the third heaven are the angels of love, innocence, peace; who are nearest to their Maker because most like Him. The ruling principle of the heavens is love to the Lord and to the neighbour, but Swedenborg's idea of a "neighbour" is the largest possible. It comprehends wife, child, relative, friend, parish, society, church, nation, and stretches out beyond national confines to embrace the remotest Gentile or most distant foreigner. Love to the neighbour means as much the cessation of internecine warfare as the exhibition of personal affection. The angels of each heaven are associated together in innumerable societies upon the principle of similarity of in-

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ternal character ; so that each society is a social and domestic heaven, where every angel fraternises with every other without the possibility of jar or discord. All is harmony, peace and joy ; the chief aim of each is to secure the greatest happiness of the greatest number, and an increase in numbers means an increase of delight. Because God is one, says Swedenborg, all heaven is one, and because He is a Divine man, all heaven is in the form of a man. But the word "form" here cannot mean shape ! We gather it is rather the idea of "use" or "office." Wilkinson observes that "as the members of the body make one person, so before God all good men make one humanity. . . . Heaven has, therefore (spiritually), all the members, organs, and viscera of a man ; its angel inhabitants, every one, are in some province of the grand man," and all wherever located in humanity "perform spiritually the offices of that part of the body whereto they correspond." The teaching seems mystical ; it can only at first be grasped in outline, but what a blow it deals to national or even astronomical isolation ! It bears the impress of that philosophical completeness possible only to a grand truth. Swedenborg next devotes several chapters to an explanation of the "correspondence" which exists between all things in heaven,

and all things in man, and all things in earth, air and sky. Heaven is the world of causes and potential energy. There creation is instantaneous; quick as thought the image which is formed in the mind is objectively reproduced around. St. Paul's Cathedral was first a spiritual or mental projection, or scheme of art, ere it became a definite architectural structure. And so with all great works; literary, scientific or otherwise. The author in publishing his ideas does not lose them; they are part of himself, and hereafter he will, according to Swedenborg, be for ever engaged in giving animated expression in various ways to the grand thoughts which will ceaselessly flow through his mind.

The grave closes over the arts and sciences, literature and poetry, church worship and domestic joy, only to open up on the other side corresponding delights. Shakespeare or Handel, Cicero or Newton, are not therefore "lost, but gone before," and carrying their tastes and their "works" with them they find infinite opportunities of development. Heaven, according to Swedenborg, is no nondescript place, but a real world teeming with living men and women, hailing from every quarter of the universe, and furnished with all paraphernalia necessary to human life. Yet so truly is "order, heaven's first law," that no

disagreement can arise, and because there is no space (an incident merely of nature). Heaven is never full, although always increasing. Everything in earth or human nature has its prototype in heaven, from which it subsists as an effect from a cause, so that there is nothing here that contributes to pure delight which we shall not enjoy hereafter, immeasurably perfected.

"Angels are men in lighter habits clad ;" they have habitations, gardens, garments, food, and all the necessaries of life, but these have not to be toiled for as here. They are, says Swedenborg, freely provided by the Lord, and not one angel lacks a joy which he has the capacity of receiving. There are rich people, but their riches are holiness and virtue, and their magnificent palaces and raiment are but reflections of their virtues. The Sun of Heaven is the Lord Jesus, and the light and heat proceeding from that Sun are divine love and wisdom ; at once the life of angels, of men, and of the material universe. Atmospheres temper the intensity of this heavenly sunshine and convey to each angel just so much of its invigorating influence as he is able to receive. The Sun, too, appears different to different angels, according to their state, and although there is no winter or night

in heaven these alternations of angelic condition produce corresponding variations of temperature, times and seasons, morning, noon, evening and twilight, so that the happy inhabitants are preserved even from the dulness of uniformity. According to the purity of an angel, he is, as it were, transparent; so that his moral condition is revealed to his fellows, and the wonderful scenery around him is the expression, by a sort of photography, of his state—varying as he varies, and always contributing to his perfect delight. Those who have mourned the incompatibility of earthly circumstances with inward aspirations will welcome such a heaven as this! Swedenborg's angels have no wings—because they do not need them. They move with the speed of thought, and it is only necessary for one to intensely desire another's presence, when that other is instantly at his side.

And whilst there is no space in heaven, all persons being distant only according to dissimilarity of character, change of state takes the place of time: according to the interest felt in the work in hand, so is the measure of its duration. Those people (lovers especially) who have experienced what unqualified nuisances time and space often are will comprehend what Swedenborg means. "Shall we know each other

there?" is an oft recurring question which the author answers affirmatively, but with the qualification that only those between whom there is genuine sympathy will remain together—other associates would speedily become disagreeable. Heaven has its government; different in form in each heaven, but all based on the one principle of mutual love, and God rules over all. Each society has its governor, each household its master, but the appointment is no sinecure, it is earned by excellence of wisdom, and, although the rulers are magnificently housed and apparelled, they are really the humble servants of those they rule, and ascribe to the One Master all merit and praise. Although Swedenborg does not say that in heaven

"Congregations ne'er break up  
And Sabbaths have no end,"

he tells us there is divine worship there in magnificent temples. The services are simple, the sermons expositions of the deep wisdom of the Word of God, which exists in heaven as here; but the angels see it in its spiritual sense, and know nothing of its literal and historical meaning. Every man is associated with the other world by means of angels, both bad and good, who attend him and endeavour to lead him. While warned and made acquainted of the results of his choice, he

is at liberty to act as he pleases. He may choose to reject the angelic ministrations and form his soul into a fiend, or he may eschew the evil and accept the good. As he chooses so will his future be fixed. His guide is the Bible, which Swedenborg holds in greatest reverence; declares it is divine: the very means of conjunction between human beings and the Lord; and that in proportion as it is loved and obeyed, especially as to its spiritual teachings, so is heaven brought nearer. Another leading idea in the same connection is that all heaven and hell are from the human race. Thus Swedenborg throws upon man all responsibility for the origin of evil, and upsets the Miltonic view of pre-Adamic angels and devils. Very beautiful is his idea that all infants go direct to heaven. Responsibility for errors, says Swedenborg, commences only when error is rationally understood, and then persisted in. Ignorance is not punishable. The infants in heaven are very numerous, but they do not remain babes. Female angels noted for their maternal solicitude tend and care for them; as they grow in knowledge they pass into other hands, and are educated in various ways; every power and faculty is brought into use, and when manhood is attained they settle down in some congenial society. This leads us to one of

Swedenborg's views which has been much misunderstood, *i.e.*, heavenly marriages. Since heaven is from the human race, the angels are male and female, and the Scripture which declares that these shall be "no more twain," is, we are told, a law in heaven as well as here. Unmarried, a man or woman is incomplete. As a man, his intellect needs to be united to affection; as a woman, her affections yearn for a masculine mind. Half our troubles arise from the separation of the male and female elements in human progress. Practice needs to be wedded to profession, sentiment to judgment, word to deed, head to heart. This spiritual marriage may take place in heaven—*must* take place if each angel is to be perfectly happy. It is not a Sadducean marriage. There are unions of mind as well as of bodies, and in heaven the internal union of married partners is so complete that, says Swedenborg, they often appear as ONE angel. There is nothing irrational in this, and while we express no opinion on these moot questions, it is necessary the peculiar views of Swedenborg should be justly stated. There are no old people in heaven; we are informed that to grow old there is to grow young: the oldest and wisest angels are the most innocent, and even appear infantile at a distance. There is perfect freedom there.



Each does just what he pleases without let or hindrance ; on the contrary, all the rest are only too glad to assist and help him in the fulfilment of his desires. Moreover, knowledge and affection are equalised, and the orderly arrangement of the vast assembly is so perfect, even to minutiae, that all unite for the individual or the common weal. Again, each angel is perfectly homogeneous in himself ; he lacks nothing of completeness, nor is he overburdened in any way. He has no personal ends to serve, and consequently no self-denial to practice ; temptation, trial, conflict, are done with for ever. The scenery around him exactly harmonises with his tastes and ideals. His every sense and faculty is perfected. Music is the language of the affections, and heaven is the land of music. Angels sing not singly, but in thousands and thousands, without discord ; every note and tone perfect, every chord full of meaning. The sense of sight, too, is sharpened. So far from objects being ghostly, vapoury, or indistinct, they are quite the reverse. There is no "yesterday" and no "to-morrow" in heaven. Yet the angels do not remain stationary. Every means of development are afforded, and the mind expands by continual exercise. The beauty of the angels, Swedenborg tells us, is utterly beyond description.

Although heaven is a place of rest, it is rest from trouble and turmoil, not from useful occupations. An idle angel is an anomaly not permissible. Each has a special use, which none but he can fulfil, and in the performance of it he finds his greatest delight. Some care for infants; others teach adults; others guard the tempted or lead newly fledged immortals ("novitiate spirits") through the gates of the eternal city. Some are appointed to keep under due control the onslaughts of infernals into human society. So that, *teste* Swedenborg, those who look upon heaven merely as a reward for well-doing; a place of idleness or retirement from business, will be woefully disappointed. Neither sensual nor artistic gratification, nor indefinite chants and glorifications, make heaven; which is only possible as a place to those who have first made it a condition. Unless within, it cannot be without. The Divine will is that *all* should go there: the bar is not on that side. If any are left out, says Swedenborg, it is their own fault. Heaven is not like an estate, to be had as a gift, or infinite love must grant it. It is a life and a condition, and must be lived and experienced. And Swedenborg maintains that not death-bed repentance nor instant conversion is effectual as an admission to heaven, but *only* regenera-

tion, which must be begun here—or not at all.

Midway between heaven and hell (equipoised, as it were) is the World of Spirits or Hades,—the world through which, *teste* Swedenborg, all souls must pass to their final home, and in the chapters on "The Intermediate State" Swedenborg describes man's condition and appearance after death. The inhabitants of the spirit world are composed of all classes from all parts of this and every other inhabited earth in the universe: the rate of flow from this world alone into the world of spirits is computed at 100,000 *per diem*! Very few of these are wholly vile; even the Emperor Nero had some good points; and very few indeed are fit to go at once to heaven, so that the world of spirits is the judgment-world. It should be explained that there is no relationship between the Hades of Swedenborg and the purgatory of which the Pope claims to be turnkey; the doctrine of purgatory being, we learn, a perversion of the belief in an intermediate state—a belief which is pretty general throughout Christendom. Resurrection, which is described as the withdrawal of the spiritual body from its earthly tabernacle by means of "spiritual attraction" exercised by the angels, takes place immediately after death, not at some remote

epoch ; and the material body has no more participation in its benefits than the husk has in the utilisation of the wheat. The process occupies generally the three days immediately succeeding death ; which is not an hereditament of Adamic indiscretion : but merely a passage from one plane of life to another, as night with its sleep intervenes between evening and a new day. When the transition is complete and the subject finds himself broad awake, he is for a time (unless he be a Swedenborgian) apt to doubt his own identity. He feels a complete man, *minus* only that cumbrous garment of clay which his sorrowing relatives are so tenderly returning to the earth from which it came ; he meets with friends and relatives ; sees around him all the paraphernalia of human existence—all very much resembling in appearance his recent home. Very soon the process of judgment begins, whereby his final state is to be determined ; for, according to Swedenborg, his stay in the world of spirits is temporary only, and judgment follows close upon resurrection. The process of judgment consists in arraiging the spirit before the bar of Divine truth ; in other words, he has to stand forward in the clear light of heaven, whose penetrating rays open up to the eyes of all beholders the acts and deeds recorded in

his Book of Life. This book is not a debtor and creditor account of sins committed and remitted, but is the "internal memory" of the soul upon which the secret springs of his character, every habit, desire, and motive, he has deliberately adopted during mundane life are indelibly engraved, as the history of the tree is traced in its grain. "Thus," we read, "a man writes his life in his physique, and the angels discover his autobiography in his structure." Under this system every spirit gradually attains to his proper level. He gets no credit for having thought or sentimentalised about religion, nor is he mulcted in penalties for faults which he could not help, or imperfections which he had no opportunity of removing here. And he is judged in perfect freedom, and in such a manner that he is himself his own executioner. So soon as he enters Hades he is taken in hand by angels of the highest order, who converse with him and examine into his interior nature. If the society of these angels is agreeable he stays with them; if not, he passes on through various grades of angelic society, until he meets with those who accord with himself. And now, in order that he may be perfected in his own degree of goodness and truth, he is subjected to certain reformatory and educational processes, with the view of

eliminating all incongruities and removing all hindrances to complete angelhood, and also of supplying all deficiencies, both of intellect and emotions ; for until head and heart be in perfect marriage union he cannot enter heaven. The work is long or short, in proportion to the tenacity with which he clings to his old doctrines and habits : the operators are the angels, and the means of education are object-lessons and allegoric representations. When development is complete, he stands forth in the bright light of heaven, a beauteous angel, and speedily rises to his own mansion in heaven, amid great rejoicings. It is just the reverse with the wicked man ; for he rushes from the presence of the angelic teachers, as a bat from the sunlight ; until he, too, meets with those who, like himself, have lived an evil life. Very soon all appearances of goodness or true ideas he may have are stripped off him, and he stands forth an image of his own hideous conceits and lusts. Conscience dies within him, all restraints are taken away, and he sinks by the weight of his own iniquity into his place in hell. The notion often pictured of the great assize as a judgment before an angry God, who hurls the wicked soul to hell with fierce denunciation ; finds no echo in Swedenborg's pages. No one, he repeatedly asserts, goes to heaven by

an act of unconditional mercy, and none perish except of their own free will, and in spite of all angelic and divine persuasions to the contrary. To convert a fiend into an angel against his will would be to extinguish his personal identity; and, moreover, says Swedenborg, the Lord never interferes with man's freedom of choice. It is universally true that—

“A man convinced against his will  
Is of the same opinion still.”

We have lingered so long over Swedenborg's interesting descriptions of heaven and the judgment-world, that we can say but little of the other place. Nor is the subject captivating. Hell, we are informed, is the antipodes of heaven, and exactly answers to it by a sort of antagonistic analogy. The good and true in heaven are perverted in Hell into the evil and false. Instead of the love of God and the neighbour which rules in heaven, in hell there are the love of self, and sensuality; and as the universal heaven resembles a grand man, so the hells collectively resemble a terrible monster. Hell acts against heaven, which in its turn re-acts, and thus is preserved that equilibrium between good and evil by which human freedom is preserved. The Lord alone governs the hells by the fear of punishments—the only means of

keeping them within limits. There is no personal devil in the ordinary sense of the term. The infernals are described as hideous monsters ; many of them having no human appearance at all.

The various scriptural references to hell-torments are interpreted by Swedenborg in a figurative sense. Thus the "lake of fire and brimstone," "the weeping, wailing, and gnashing of teeth," "the undying worm," &c., &c., represent the direful lusts and passions and false ideas of the infernals, always in active collision the one with the other. The scenery and appearances in the hells are in exact accord with the minds and tastes of their inhabitants, and may more easily be imagined than described. The slums of St. James and St. Giles are bad enough ; but what of a vast colony of such, stripped of all appearances of decency and order, and the inherent vileness and treachery increased a hundredfold ? Yet, says Swedenborg, the infernals have a sort of insane pleasure in their life ; they have their delights, which he thus speaks of : "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. The diabolical crew perceive so much pleasure therein, that if



it were possible to increase and strain pangs and torments to infinity, they would not even then be satisfied."

As regards the punishment of *les misérables*, Swedenborg's views, albeit they contradict some once popular notions, are philosophical and just. All pain, he declares, is the inevitable result of the violation of some law, and the sole end and aim of all true punishment is to restrain the subject from any further or fresh violation. As the very life of the infernals consists in a perpetual desire and attempt to compass the destruction of each other, of mankind, and even of the universe and its Creator; it follows that they are always violating laws of order, and thereby bringing down upon themselves the pains and penalties inseparably attached to such violations. But the punishment is always specific, not general; always proportioned to the offence, not arbitrary; and none are punished there for sins committed here—that would be mere vengeance. Moreover, neither the Lord nor the angels punish; the pain and suffering endured is the inevitable result of sin, and the dread of pain is the only means by which the Divine Being can govern and keep the infernals in subjection. No other rule is possible there; and although the wretched inhabitants may be so reduced and subdued by the fear of

punishment as to become almost inactive, it is not possible for them to become angels (as some tender-hearted humanitarians teach) because the elements of such a change are gone : the devils being *perfect* in their degree are best off where they are, and could not exist elsewhere. They have no desire for change, no conscience, no sense of shame or remorse, no love of goodness or truth, no longing to become heavenly-minded. Swedenborg therefore teaches, although in an entirely modified form, that hell is everlasting ; a tenet which he bases upon the same divine law that secures for the angel an eternity of happiness in heaven, *i.e.*, that each man is just what he has, by the exercise of his freewill, made himself ; his life is his love, and to destroy the one you must destroy the other.

The next work is entitled, *An account of the Last Judgment and the Destruction of Babylon ; showing that all the predictions of the Apocalypse are at this day fulfilled ; being a Relation of Things heard and seen.* In this work, as the title sufficiently indicates, Swedenborg trenches upon debatable land, and while we may not follow him there, and compare his lucubrations with the teachings of Dr. Cumming and other millennarians, the book (a small treatise only in size) is so important a link in the testimony concerning this remarkable

man, that it cannot be passed over entirely. Few of his works so directly illustrate the full extent of Swedenborg's claims as this "Account of the Last Judgment," a judgment which preceded the descent out of heaven, of that New Jerusalem of which he was the apostle, though not the founder. The last judgment is an application of the process of individual judgment, already described, to the Church or the age. Three times, says Swedenborg, has such a consummation of the age taken place. Once in the time of Noah; where it is figured by the flood, and the new church is symbolised by the ark and its occupants. Once again, at the termination of the Jewish dispensation; when our Lord appeared on the earth, effected human redemption, and reduced all things in Hades to order. And lastly, in 1757; when the church founded by the apostles was judged, and spiritually disestablished in the manner figuratively described in the Apocalypse. It was this last judgment which Swedenborg asserts he witnessed. From the time of the Emperor Constantine, the church founded by the apostles in simple love and faith began to decline and fall away from its "first estate"; anger and strife succeeded Christian love and amity; cruel wars and crusades were undertaken ostensibly for religious extension, but really for

power and pelf. The priests controlled all education, and the Bible was to the people a sealed book, set aside continually for human creeds. The doctrines of the Church and Word were perverted and twisted to suit the aims and conceits of priests and prelates. The popes, fired with the lust of domination in spiritual things, actually usurped the office of Christ, and sought to exclude from participation in His free grace, all who did not pay and believe according to their prescriptions. The Reformation was an attempt to upset the false teachings of Rome, by setting up in their place the doctrines of justification by faith alone and the vicarious sacrifice. The result was continual collision between Catholics and Protestants; the fierce conflicts of which contributed still further to disturb the religious air, until, at the time the seer speaks of—1757,—all true religion had well nigh expired in the Church: the masses were left to grope for the truth in darkness, and atheism, immorality, and profanity, encouraged by the abominations of the priesthood, threatened to over-run the civilised world. During this gradual decadence of the Church, these fiery zealots, hypocritical monks and Jesuits, together with the ignorant masses and the few brave ones who had held fast to the

faith once delivered to the saints), passed into the world of spirits; and although there subjected to the process of individual judgment already referred to, the vast majority were so wrapped up in their insane conceits and phantasies, their spiritual constitutions were such complicated mixtures of the true and the false, the good and the evil, that the process of separation of the one from the other was exceedingly difficult and protracted. So that they remained there for centuries, their numbers ever augmenting; building up Churches and creeds, and making to themselves spurious heavens and earths, as they had been, in effect, doing all their lives. Communicating with heaven by their faith and professions, and with hell by their life, they intercepted and perverted the light flowing from heaven worldward—hence the thick religious darkness which succeeded the “dim religious light” of mediæval times. Swedenborg asserts that it is these spurious heavens and earths that are referred to in Holy Writ as to be destroyed at the “last day,” *i.e.* the end of the age or Church. As to this and other earths, they will, he says, never be destroyed; judgment is effected upon humanity, not upon stones and clods, or even erratic comets.

Thus the sole object of the last judg-

ment was the dispersion of the thick clouds which were gathered in the religious sky ; eclipsing God's sun and moon, and disturbing the equilibrium between heaven and hell upon which the safety of the human race depends. The great work took some months to execute, and the Romanists, we are informed, were judged first and the Protestants at some interval afterwards. The whole of the nations and peoples requiring judgment were arranged together in the spirit world in a circular form ; each in a position corresponding to its capacity for reception of truth. The Reformed Churches were placed in the centre, the Romanists around them ; next to these the Mahometans, and so on, the circumference being bounded as by a sea. The angels then descended from heaven amongst the multitudes, discovering the evil and separating them from the good, who were placed apart in a situation of safety. Then above the spurious heavens there appeared a stormy cloud, from which the influence of the Lord Himself was specially brought to bear upon the inhabitants. The result was an exposure of their real characters, and their evils being thus roused and brought to light, they threw off all borrowed plumes and rushed into the greatest enormities. Now there occurred great (spirit-

ual) earthquakes and other terrible disturbances, and the hells were disclosed to view as of a bottomless pit filled with fire and brimstone. The Lord now descended from heaven in a bright cloud with angels, a sound as of trumpets was heard, and all the wicked were seen gathered together in the form of a great dragon, with its tail brandished as if to draw down heaven; but it was cast down and sank beneath. The whole foundations of the spurious earth and heaven now disappeared, and every evil person therein found a home in the bottomless pit, while the good, who had been set aside, were delivered of all their infirmities and taken up into heaven. Thus passed away the "first heaven and the first earth," and Swedenborg relates that "After this there was joy in heaven and light in the world of spirits, such as was not before, and the interposing clouds between heaven and mankind being removed a similar light also then arose on men in the world, giving them new enlightenment."

Here Swedenborg chimes with history, which attests in unmistakable language that since the time referred to the world has made enormous strides in an upward direction. Swedenborg's account of the Last Judgment is chiefly remarkable in respect to the time and place of its occur-

rence. So far as concerns the date, the matter has been involved in so much mystery, partly by the attempts to explain it, and partly in accordance with the well-known rule that prophecies are never understood till fulfilled, that the last judgment seems quite as likely to be *un fait accompli* as not. And as regards its occurrence in the world of spirits instead of here, it may be noted that, apart from the question of possibility, the scenes which St. John in Patmos describes were seen and heard "in the spirit," and Swedenborg's revelations are a practical exposition of the "spiritual sense" of that portion of the Apocalypse which bears upon the subject. But we have not yet done with the wonders which the seer brings to view. His work on *The Earths in the Universe* seems even more astonishing than the two last referred to, but an examination of the book reveals its consistency with Swedenborg's previous writings, and with his general character. It will be remembered that in his scientific days he was an ardent astronomer, and with larger sight than his fellows he intuitively judged that our little earth was not alone, but that the star-studded sky teemed with inhabited planets. And when he became seer he observed that the inhabitants of these planets after death passed into the spirit world, and were



always spiritually associated with the earth on which they had been born. The book now before us professes to be a relation of seership extending to the planets Mercury, Jupiter, Mars, Saturn, Venus, and the moon, and to five earths in the starry universe to which no names are given. The "two eminent physicists" who have recently given to the world some very interesting speculations on the future state in a work entitled *The Unseen Universe*, seem to find, as others have before them, these astronomical peregrinations of Swedenborg difficult of credence, and while they express with no faint praise their belief in his honesty and profound wisdom, they say, "had he confined himself to the invisible world, it would have been very difficult to prove him the subject of a delusion, but when he visits the planets and describes their inhabitants, he enters at once upon dangerous ground." But this is hardly the way to view the matter. The means by which Swedenborg saw the planetary inhabitants he is careful to explain at length, and they are simply an enlargement of the means by which he saw "the invisible world." The *impedimenta* of space and time being removed in seership, it was simply necessary that Swedenborg's mind should be brought into harmony and concord with the persons

and scenes to be visited, to enable him to travel there without leaving his arm-chair, and he declares that upon request the Lord was pleased to grant him the power to undergo the necessary transitions and changes of state which represent spiritual travelling. Hence he saw and conversed with certain spirits who had come from these various planets, and *through them* he saw their respective worlds, and observed the appearance, life, food, raiment, worship, avocations, and general conduct of the inhabitants. Even to those who do not yield it their credence, the work is an interesting and novel one. Some fun has been aroused by Swedenborg's omission to include in his descriptions the planet Herschel, which at his time was not known to exist, but which it is supposed he as a seer should have been acquainted with. But, curiously enough, this is a point in his favour. There is abundant evidence in his scientific works that he believed there were seven planets in our solar system, and had he been so disposed he might have drawn upon his imagination, and described the planet named Herschel. That he did not do so proves his honesty, and his followers assert that the omission is explicable upon the theory that he saw only what he was permitted to see, and that his description of an unknown planet would (when the

planet was found) almost have enforced belief in his claims.

Another little work, *The New Jerusalem and its Heavenly Doctrine*, is a brief summary of the principles of the New Jerusalem Church, and, more than any other of Swedenborg's own works, gives a reader in small compass the tenets of this denomination. At the end of the book Swedenborg gives his views on Ecclesiastical and Civil Government. He deprecates spiritual domination by priests, and urges that every respect be shown for difference of religious opinion in the Church. The position and dignity of government do not belong, but are only annexed to those who rule.

It was not to be expected that Swedenborg, the son of a Lutheran bishop, and connected with other church dignitaries, would be entirely overlooked by his clerical friends. M. Robsahm relates that "he used at first to speak freely of his visions and spiritual explications of Scripture, but as this displeased the clergy, who proclaimed him a heretic and madman, he resolved to be less communicative of his knowledge in company;" but the rector of the parish in which Swedenborg lived said to Robsahm, "I cannot think him to be such a person as many do; I have myself conversed with him, and in company where we have been together, and I have

found him to be a good and holy man." In 1760 two bishops, relatives of Swedenborg, waited on him, and in a friendly manner complained of his inattention to the services and sacraments of the Church. This, after a careful scrutiny of his conduct and deportment, was the only flaw they could discover. In his reply, he stated that, being in association with angels, religious observances were not so necessary to him as to others, but for the sake of "example" he promised acquiescence. He, however, preferred to receive the sacrament from an unpopular curate, on the ground that "I hear he speaks what he thinks, and by this means has lost the good-will of his people, as generally happens in this world." Generally Swedenborg was averse to discussion on religious subjects. When attacked (as he often was, and sometimes most insolently) in company, he would reply in a few calm quiet words, and if his hearers were not convinced, or exhibited excitement, he would retire, saying, "Read my writings with care and without prejudice, and they will give you reason to change your opinion." He never attempted to proselytise or persuade any one to receive his opinions, and was only communicative of his views to those whom he thought virtuous, disposed to hear them fairly, capable of

comprehending them, and loving the truth.

In the midst of his supernatural occupations this extraordinary man was mindful of his duty to his country as a member of the House of Nobles. From 1718, when he began official life as assessor in the College of Mines, till his death (1772), he was a consistent supporter of the Constitutional form of government. In 1761 we find him taking somewhat an active part in the political discussions of the Swedish Diet. It is related by the then Prime Minister of Sweden, Count Hopken, "that the most valuable and well-written memorials on finance were presented to the Diet in 1761 by Swedenborg." He was, moreover, a member of the Secret Committee of the Diet, an office to which only the wisest, most trusted, and influential politicians were appointed. At this time the famous Hat and Cap factions disturbed Sweden. Swedenborg seems not to have taken sides, but in one of his speeches supports the Hats' view, and urges alliance with France rather than England, on account of the latter's engagements with Holland. Some of the memorials he presented are still in existence, and by the exertions of Dr. R. L. Tafel, of Camdenroad, have been rescued from oblivion. One of them is a suggestion to the Go-

vernment to prepare a yearly balance-sheet of income and expenditure showing the financial position of the country. A leading Swedish historian states that this was the first time such a proposal had been made *in any country* ! There are two other memorials relative to encouragement in mining and the arts, and the restrictions on mining enterprise. In another paper Swedenborg speaks strongly against the declaration of war with Russia ; he argues forcibly against an aggressive as distinguished from a defensive war. In another memorial he appears as an advocate for limiting the sale of intoxicating liquors, and proposes they should be sold in the usual way, "but the purchasers should not lounge about in the house." They might "have what they wanted and then go away." He also recommends that a limit should be placed on the distillation of whiskey, and the distilleries subjected to license, so as to bring in some profit to the country from them—"if, indeed," says he, "it be impossible to altogether overcome the use of so pernicious a drink." But one of the most remarkable of the seer's memorials is that in which, speaking of the direful evils proceeding from despotic government, he describes in vigorous language the seductions of Popery as exhibited in the careers of the neighbouring countries,

and eloquently pleads for the retention of their Constitutional liberty, lest, under a despotic monarchy, his country might fall into the clutches of the Jesuits. The following passage in this memorial suggests recollections of Mr. Gladstone's recent pamphlets on Vaticanism. "The only guarantee and counter check against such calamities" (Popish ascendancy and interference) "would be oath and conscience. Certainly, if there were an oath, and the majority were sufficiently conscientious to respect it, civil and religious liberty and all that is valuable might indeed in every kingdom remain inviolate; but on the other hand, we must bear in mind that the Papal Chair can dissolve all oaths and absolve every conscience by virtue of the keys of St. Peter." There is another memorial, in which Swedenborg laments the depreciation of the paper currency in consequence of the suspension of cash payments. From a number of letters addressed by Count Hopken to General Tuxen in the years 1772 to 1781, published in the *New Jerusalem Magazine* in 1790-91, we glean some idea of the estimation in which Swedenborg was held by so thorough a politician and man of the world as this Prime Minister of Sweden. "I have not only known the Assessor Swedenborg," says Hopken, "for two and forty years, but

some time ago was daily in his company. One who like me has lived long in the world in a public position must have had numerous opportunities of knowing men virtuous and vicious, strong and weak; and in all my experience I do not recollect a character of more uniform excellence than Swedenborg;—always contented, never fretful or morose. He was a true philosopher, and he lived like one. He laboured diligently, and lived frugally without sordidness. . . . Not having intercourse with spirits myself, I can neither affirm nor contradict what he has to say about them, but his supernatural relations are no more extraordinary than the Apocalypse and other parts of the Bible. Of his doctrines, however, I can judge; they are excellent, irrefutable, the best ever taught, and conducive to the happiest social life. Whilst the Swedenborgian system forms virtuous men and citizens, it represses all kinds of enthusiasm and superstition which beget such cruel, vexatious, and ridiculous singularities.

“The present religion is mystical and full of paradoxes. It is as incoherent and unreasonable, as if formed for cattle rather than rational men. According to its tenets, you may perpetrate any villainies and yet be saved. The doctrine of the priests is polytheism; one god is the creator of the



world, another the author of religion." "I have sometimes told the king that if ever a new colony were formed no better religion could be established there than that developed by Swedenborg from the sacred Scriptures, and for these reasons:—

"1. This religion, in preference to and in a higher degree than any other, must produce the most honest and industrious subjects, for it places, and places properly, *the worship of God in USES.*

"2. It causes the *least fear of death*; death being regarded as a transition from one state to another: from a worse to a better situation.

"Upon his principles I look upon death as of hardly greater consequence than drinking a glass of water."

The fact that Swedenborg in the height of his fame as a spirit-seer, and in spite of clerical persecutions, was able successfully to maintain a high political dignity, win the admiration and respect of such a keen-sighted man of the world as Count Hopken, and secure from the Government and people of Sweden tolerance of his peculiar views, testifies in a remarkable degree to the soundness of his mental constitution, his virtue, and common sense. Robsahm says—"Swedenborg took great interest in the doings of the Swedish Diet, but when he perceived that envy and self-interest

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reigned there he was seldom after seen in the House. . . . He adhered to neither of the parties, but loved truth and justice in all his feelings and actions."

In July, 1762, we find Swedenborg in Amsterdam, and White relates the following anecdote, the authority for which is the celebrated Jung Stilling. "I was in Amsterdam," said Stilling's informant, "in the year 1762 (on the very day that Peter III. of Russia died), in a company of which Swedenborg made one. In the midst of our conversation his countenance changed; it was evident his soul was no longer present, and that something extraordinary was passing in him. As soon as he had come to himself, he was asked what had happened. He would not at first tell, but being pressed, he said, 'This very hour the Emperor Peter has died in prison' (mentioning at the same time the manner of his death). . . . In due time the newspapers announced Peter's death on that very day. Peter was strangled by Count Orlov, at the instigation of his wife, who, as Catherine II., reigned in his stead."

Jung Stilling also relates an interview between a certain merchant from Elberfeld and Swedenborg. The merchant was an old and intimate friend of Stilling's, and had a high character for integrity

and truthfulness. He desired proofs from Swedenborg as to the reality of spiritual sight, and stated that he "had a friend, a student of divinity, at Duisburg, where he fell into a consumption and died. A short time before his death we conversed on an important subject. Can you ascertain from him what that subject was?" Swedenborg said, 'Call on me in a few days; I will try if I can find your friend.' The merchant did so, and was met by Swedenborg with the startling announcement, 'I have seen your friend. You conversed on the 'Restitution of all things,' and he then with the greatest precision stated what each had maintained. The merchant turned pale, for the proof was strong and invincible. After some further conversation, my friend," says Stilling, "took his leave, perfectly convinced, and returned to Elberfeld."

Whilst at Amsterdam in 1763-4 Swedenborg published four treatises on *The Doctrine of the New Jerusalem concerning the Lord, the Sacred Scriptures, Faith, and Life*, also *A Continuation of the Last Judgment*, and two small works entitled, *Angelic Wisdom Concerning the Divine Providence, and Divine Love and Wisdom*.

We turn aside now to briefly examine the contents of these works *seriatim*.

The treatise on *The Doctrine of the Lord*

is an elaborate argument for the sole and supreme Divinity of the Lord Jesus Christ—a doctrine which is the foundation-stone of Swedenborg's theology and philosophy. The most remarkable feature of this little pamphlet is the enormous mass of Scriptural testimony adduced ; in fact, it seems as if Swedenborg's propositions were literally constructed out of the very words of Scripture. Briefly stated, the doctrine of the Lord is as follows :—Jehovah God, the Creator and Preserver of heaven and earth, Who is essential love and wisdom, or goodness and truth, is One both in essence and in person. The tri-personality, dogma, Swedenborg says, is nowhere taught in Scripture, and was unknown to the Church previous to the Council of Nice. But there is in the Deity a trinity of essentials, the Father or Divine Love, being the essential Divinity, the Son or Divine Wisdom, being the Divine Humanity, and the Holy Spirit, being the Divine Life which proceeds from the union of the Father and the Son. These three essentials are now united in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. Swedenborg aptly illustrates the subject by a reference to the triune constitution of man, as composed of soul, body, and operative energy or power. The work of Redemption is not limited by Swedenborg to the period of our Lord's life

on earth, but commenced in Eden so soon as man began to fall from his original innocent state. The same Jehovah who watched with Infinite paternal solicitude over the whole downward career of His children, and who sought now by "the angel of His presence," and now by a Moses, by prophets, or by seers, to preserve them from ruin; when the declension had reached its climax, and both the natural and spiritual universes were in utter disorder, Himself descended from heaven as Divine truth, or the Word made flesh, and assumed through the Virgin Mary a human nature, utterly vile and corrupt in its propensities to evil, yet without sin. In this human nature he met and fought the infernal powers, and by repeated conflicts, trials, and temptations,—the last and most painful being the passion of the cross, he entirely subdued all the hells, even to the lowest, and once for all redeemed man from their control. By the same processes he put off the human nature derived from Mary, and in its place assumed a Human from the Divine within; this He glorified and made one with the Father; in this he arose from the sepulchre, appeared to his disciples, descended into Hades, restored all things there into order, and finally ascended into and above the heavens having made His Divine Humanity "a new

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and living way" by which all who believe in Him and live according to His example will be saved from their sins.

In other portions of this treatise Swedenborg explains the meaning of the various names applied to the Messiah in the Scriptures, and also states that the Athanasian Creed agrees with the truth on this subject if for its Trinity of persons be substituted a Trinity of person in the Lord Jesus Christ.

As will have been observed by our readers, Swedenborg's doctrine of redemption utterly negatives the substitutional or vicarious character of the Atonement, for, in his view, Christ died "for," not "instead of" us, to save us "from our sins," not merely remit the penalty of sin, and to reconcile man to God, not conciliate an angry Deity by the sacrifice of an innocent one. But there be many not of the "New Church" who consider that Swedenborg's doctrine is consonant with Scripture, justice, and common sense. So also, if Swedenborg shuts out in the cold the dogmas of the tripersonality of God, the eternal sonship, the immaculate conception, original sin and the full satisfaction of the law's penalties by Christ, he re-establishes the oneness of Deity, explains the mystery of the Trinity (so far as it can be ex-

plained), and satisfies our best conceptions of the character of God and the requirements of man. Indeed, it is impossible not to admit that his doctrine is wonderful in its simplicity, its consistency, its scriptural confirmations, and in that focusing, so to speak, of the sympathies of the Christian upon one object of adoration—upon the Divine person with whose tenderness, mercy, and amiability the gospels have made us so familiar. In the treatise on *The Sacred Scriptures*, Swedenborg approaches them in an affirmative spirit, and instead of criticising their external appearance, their authenticity, their credibility, he starts at once with the doctrine that the Sacred Scripture, or Word of God, is Divine truth itself, because it contains within its literal sense a spiritual and divine meaning whereby it is divinely inspired, holy in every syllable, the fountain of wisdom alike to angels and to men. The Scriptures have by no writer been so highly eulogised as by Swedenborg, nor so much applied; for it may be truly said that biblical passages are the stones of the ecclesiastical edifice which he has so laboriously constructed. If he be correct in his teachings, the question of inspiration is settled, and with it the minor questions relating to the authenticity or accu-

racy of the sacred books. For if by internal evidence the Scriptures be proved divine, the search for proofs of their credibility may well be put aside. The spiritual sense is united to the letter by correspondences, every word or expression answering to and enfolding a spiritual and divine idea utterly distinct from its literal meaning. But the literal sense contains Divine truth (as the body contains the soul) in its fulness, its sanctity, and power, and all the doctrines of the Church must be drawn from and confirmed by the letter. By means of the correspondences according to which the Word is written, Divine truth is clothed or accommodated to the apprehension of every condition of mind, whether it be celestial, spiritual, or natural, or carnal—all may draw from it the truths suited to their condition. To the celestial angels (for the Word exists in all the heavens, in its spiritual form) it is a storehouse of celestial wisdom; the spiritual angels draw from it spiritual, and the natural angels natural truths. When the Bible is read on earth devoutly, the angels draw near and read it according to their perceptions, and while human eyes wander over descriptions of the wars of the Israelites, unseen companions read therein a record of the conflict of truth with falsity, evil with error, or of the victories of the



Lord over the hells. The quality of the truths which the Church or its members possess is determined by their understanding of the Scriptures, from whence they must derive their doctrine. Throughout the Word, even to minutia, the subject of the union of goodness and truth, or the marriage of the Lord and His Church is treated of: this is evidenced in the repeated use of twin expressions, such as justice and judgment, joy and gladness, nations and peoples; the one having reference to good, the other to truth, and the "and" signifying union. There are portions of the Bible which, like some phenomena in nature, present truth in an inverted form. Thus we say "the sun rises and sets," and in the Bible we read, "God is angry with the wicked every day." Both of these are true only in appearance. The one is true to the ignorant, who trusts to his senses only, the other is true of him in whom anger has dominion, "for every one," says Swedenborg, "regards the Lord to be such as he himself is." And these apparent truths are provided in the Word for those who can only by such means be taught to fear and serve the Lord. It needed a Galileo to attest, under persecution, that the earth moves round the sun, and it remains for a Swedenborg to rise up and acquaint the world that the attitude

of the Sun of Righteousness towards man is ever the same, and that it is only man's position which requires alteration. Previous to the present Bible there was an ancient Word (still in existence somewhere in Tartary, says Swedenborg), which was purely allegorical in form. From this Word the first eleven chapters of Genesis were derived, and it is also quoted from in the present Bible, *e.g.*, the book of Jasher (2 Sam. i. 17, 18), and the book of the Wars of Jehovah (Num. xxi. 14, 15). Some portions of the Bible we possess not being written throughout according to pure correspondences, are not a portion of the Divine Word. Amongst these non-canonical books, of which Swedenborg gives a list, are the Epistles, "which are very good books for the Church, but as they are dogmatic writings merely, and have only a mediate communication with heaven, they are not the Word." And as to the inspired writers, Swedenborg says they were simply penmen,—mortals like ourselves, and not saints, but types of saints. The Jews, too, were appointed the chosen people of God, not from any merit they had, but because, being tenacious, they would carefully preserve Scriptures consigned to them, and their history at the same time served to typify human progress in regeneration. The nations

and peoples out of the Christian Church are spiritually enlightened from the Word in proportion as they are in communication with Christians. Without the Word, which is the only medium of conjunction with heaven, man would have no knowledge of the Lord, of heaven and hell, or of the life after death.

The treatise on *Faith* opens with mild ridicule of the present-day-idea of faith, as something which must be believed on the authority of the church, *because* it cannot be comprehended. "Genuine faith," says Swedenborg, "is an acknowledgment that a thing is so because it is true." It is "the assurance with which we embrace that which is true," and only that which is seen to be true can be the proper object of faith. "Spiritual truths," he continues, "are as capable of being comprehended as natural truths. Every one has the ability of perceiving the truth when made clear to his mind, and upon that perception he must base his faith." The angels say, How can you believe a thing when you do not see whether it is true or not? and if any one thinks that such a perception of truth is not accessible to him, Swedenborg's recipe is "Shun evils as sins, and apply to the Lord; then you will have as much as you desire." But faith cannot exist without charity, which is de-

fined as the affection for what is good, because the essence of faith is charity and the form of charity is faith. When faith and charity are separated in the Church it ceases to exist. The mere knowledge of what is good or true is not faith or charity any more than an acorn is an oak-tree—but it may become so by *use*. True faith is a belief in the Lord ; but “to believe in Him is to have confidence that he will save, and because no one can have such confidence but he who lives a good life, therefore this also is implied by believing in Him.” The remaining portions of the pamphlet are devoted to a vigorous onslaught on the doctrine of justification by faith alone, and an *exposé* of the spiritual state of those whose faith is separated from charity, and who are referred to in the scriptures, says Swedenborg, under the types of Philistines, the dragon of the Apocalypse, goats, &c. If Swedenborg's views on faith are practical, his *Doctrine of Life for the New Jerusalem*, is much more so. It starts with the axiom, “*All religion has relation to life, and the life of religion is to do good.*” Swedenborg declares that so far and only so far as a man shuns evils as sins against God, so far can he do good, not, however, from himself, but from the Lord alone. Ceasing from evil must precede doing well. No one really loves the

truth or is either pious, or wise, or good, who does not shun evils as sins. "There is not with man a grain of truth more than there is of good; thus not a grain of faith more than there is of life. . . . Faith and life march on with equal step." The Decalogue teaches what are evils, and Swedenborg goes through the commandments *seriatim*, and points out that they do not merely refer to natural evils but also to their spiritual sources. Then he leads up to the doctrine that the reality of a man's interior aversion to evils is in proportion to the vigour with which he fights against them as of himself, yet always referring to the Lord for strength and giving Him the praise. If a man shuns evils for any other reason than because they are sins against God, he does not really shun but only prevents their appearance before men, and after death his real character is seen to be evil.

In *The Continuation of the Last Judgment*, the judgment of the Protestants in the spiritual world is described, but we have already dealt with this subject in referring to *The Last Judgment*.

*The Angelic Wisdom Concerning the Divine Providence*, as its title implies, deals with vital questions—questions which have ever been stumbling-blocks to thoughtful souls, and fruitful sources of

unbelief—and deals with them in a way that should make the work a valuable aid to those who have to wage war against the Giants Doubt and Despair, either in their own or on others' behalf.

Swedenborg defines the Divine Providence to be the government of Divine love and wisdom—the sway of One who is “too wise to err and too good to be unkind.” This government has one main purpose, *i.e.*, the formation of a heaven out of the human race, thereby securing the everlasting happiness of every individual. *Æterna Salus populi suprema lex*, and it regards temporal matters as important only as they serve eternal interests. He who can drink in this first principle of Divine providence lays hold of a rock.

Another law of Divine providence is that man should co-operate with God in His great purposes—man's failure to do his part is the source of all his troubles. God supplies the materials—man must utilise them. He gives love and wisdom for the soul, heat and light and their products for the body—man must appropriate these to his own needs or he dies. And the co-operation must be spontaneous, not forced. “Ye will not come to Me that ye might have life” (John v. 40); shows not only that man has freedom, but that in freedom he must accept even his own salvation. Swedenborg

affirms that "Regeneration in man is effected by his removing evils from his external life, *as of himself*; yet knowing that all good and truth are from the Lord, he acknowledges as a consequence that all power to remove these evils is necessarily derived from the Lord alone;" and in proportion as a man restrains himself from the actual commission of any evil, the interior source of that evil is removed secretly by the Lord. By shunning evils, therefore, man relieves himself of their control, and all his temptations cease. A noted sceptic once asked why God did not write His name upon the sun so that all could see it, and believe in His existence! But His name *is* written on the sun; yet Tom Paine could not see it, and Swedenborg tells us that Providence does not force a man to believe by means of signs and wonders, visions, threats, or punishments—a willing heart does not want them, and an unwilling one will not have them. By another law of Providence, it is arranged that every man so disposed may be conjoined to the Lord (which conjunction is heaven) by means of the Word. As he reads and reflects upon its teachings, he places himself within the sphere and influence of Divine wisdom; and as he practices what he has learned, he similarly comes into the sphere of Divine love. Yet the guidance is not felt

as such : the attraction seems self-derived ; he feels quite independent, yet knows and acknowledges that he is led by invisible cords to do many things aright. Swedenborg lays great stress upon this acknowledgment of actual dependence under the *appearance* of independence. It is provided, he says, that man should be practically unconscious of the operations of Providence, except retrospectively. Otherwise his foreknowledge would terribly shorten his comforts, annul his reason, and destroy his judgment, together with the pleasures of hope and the love of life. Seemingly alone and self-existent, he is really dependent for momentary subsistence upon his Maker, and the truly wise man keeps this ever before him. Such dependence does not detract from manliness ; rather it adds to dignity, and it is the death-blow to infidelity, to scepticism, to a host of evils, springing from what Swedenborg euphemistically terms, "self-derived intelligence." All those troublesome questions arising out of the Divine permission of evil, pain, and sorrow, Swedenborg very fully enters into. He gives answers to the questions :—Why was the Adamic fall permitted ? Why are the impious, the profane, or the impure often in possession of honour and riches ; while the pious, the devout, and the pure suffer poverty and



contempt? Why are wars, famines, plagues, murders, tyrannical governments, and laws, poverty, crime, earthquakes, fires, tempests, accidents, permitted? Why have men been allowed to sink into idolatry, ignorance, and savagery? Why is Christianity numerically the least of religions, and, at the same time, divided by sectarian strife? Why is it that hell exists, and iniquity goes unpunished? &c., &c. The principles upon which Swedenborg's explanation is based are very simple. All evil, he says, is of human origin, and springs always from violation of Divine laws. Its cessation is to be accomplished only by removal of its causes, and the responsibility for this work of removal rests upon man. Were every individual to do his duty to his neighbour and his God, all forms of evil would speedily disappear, as the beast of prey retires before the cultivation of the soil. Evil is permitted by Providence as a *dernier r esort*; the wicked man is as much the subject of Divine attention as the good; the aim being to modify or lessen his iniquities, or utilise his powers for the benefit of mankind. Swedenborg further shows that every man, so long as he lives in this world, is capable of becoming heavenly-minded; that there is no such thing as predestination (unless it be predestination to heaven); that the

Lord never imputes either evil or good to any man, but leaves him to make his choice of either the one or the other ; and that he never acts contrary to His laws, which are unerring, being the laws of infinite love and wisdom.

*The Angelic Wisdom concerning the Divine Love and Wisdom* is a concise exposition of all the principles which underlie Swedenborg's system of theosophy. It is his *Spiritual Principia*, and those who approach the highest subjects of thought, not from the doctrinal, but from the philosophical and scientific side, will find this work the best calculated to give an insight into Swedenborg's philosophy of creation. On its merits, which all must admit are very great, the work deserves most careful perusal. Once accustomed to Swedenborg's peculiar style of diction, the young theosophical or scientific student will find here ample satisfaction of many of his most troublesome problems, and will, we think, feel grateful to the author for, at least, enlarging the scope and broadening the foundations of man's knowledge concerning God and His works. The book is divided into five parts, treating (1) of God ; (2) the Spiritual Sun ; (3) Degrees ; (4) Creation of the Universe ; (5) Creation of Man. We can only here give a mere outline of the principles of

the work, referring the reader to the volume itself for fuller satisfaction.

In Part I. Swedenborg first ascertains that "the life of man consists in his ruling love;" therefore, says he, love and life are one: destroy the one, and the other ceases to be. God is Life itself—because He is Love Itself, and also Wisdom Itself. Love is the Divine *Esse*, soul, or substance, Wisdom is His *Existere*, body, or form, and love and wisdom, *i.e.*, God, are "substance and form in themselves; consequently the self-subsisting and sole-subsisting Being." He is, therefore, the one source and fountain of life; from His substance are all substances, and from His wisdom all forms and modes. "Since, therefore, man is not life, but a recipient of life, it follows that the conception of a man from his father is not a conception of life, but only of the first and purest forms receptive of life, to which, as a stamen or beginning, substances are successively added in the womb." Into the receptacle thus formed God pours His life, and the creature becomes a living human soul. The cause of creation, declares Swedenborg, lies in the simple fact that Divine like human love (when it is unselfish) cannot exist apart from objects upon whom it may bestow, and who are capable of intelligently appreciating its affection. Apart from God

the universe is dead and inert—He fills it with His life and it rejoices therein. The secret of creation is its Humanity. Man stands at the top, and to him all forms of existence, all forces—spiritual, natural, dynamic—converge and point. He is at once the epitome of the natural and of the spiritual universes. And as the effect must be in the cause, and Man (individual and aggregated) is the handiwork of God, God is a Man in first principles—in fact, the only perfect man : the only truly wise and good ; Who has every one of the attributes and functions of humanity in infinite perfection, yet is entirely independent of space and time, which are only conditions of mundane existence. Although the conception of God as a Divine man is the best possible, it is not easy to the ordinary mind, whose ideas as to form, shape and locality, limit, confuse, and destroy the conception. Hence Swedenborg argues that the mind must raise itself above natural into spiritual ideas of thought. We may view a society, a nation, or even the whole human race, as one man, because, in a certain sense, it has a human form. One portion represents the “head,” another the “hands” and “feet” and “members,” another the “main body,” the heart and lungs and stomach—indeed, the whole of the parts fit together into one

harmonious whole when viewed according to the *use* which each portion bears to the totality. Such an idea of the human form is quite removed from space and time—is, in fact, spiritual, and it is, we apprehend, upon some such principle of thought that Swedenborg bases his conception of the God-man. But he is careful to avoid Pantheism, and points out that the mind in thinking of God must entirely dissociate itself from ideas of size, shape, locality: must not forget that in Himself the Almighty is invisible, unknowable, unapproachable, and can only be truly worshipped as revealed in the person of Jesus Christ. Just as the sun is present in every part of nature, and the soul in every atom of the body, but yet perfectly distinct from it, so is God the omnipresent substance, the omniscient wisdom, the omnipotent life of the universe, yet perfectly distinct from it—as distinct as infinite can be from finite. The matter requires study, but will repay the thought needed to be expended on its elucidation. Swedenborg has evidently struck the keynote of all the harmonies of creation, and nothing is needed to catch the wonderful symphony but release from the fetters of materialism.

In Part II. Swedenborg describes the instrumental cause of the universe—the Sun of the spiritual world. There is, he

says, a sphere of emanations flowing from and surrounding the Divine Being, which appear to the angels as a sun. This sun is not God, nor is it infinite, but is connected with Him by contiguity; its heat and light are Divine love and wisdom, and it is composed of the first and purest substances nearest to the Divine. The Sun appears to the angels as our sun to us, but always in the same position—at an angle of forty-five degrees, and, in accordance with one of the principal laws of heaven, its apparent brilliancy, and distance from the angels are proportioned to the quality of their affection for the Lord. But wherever they may turn, the sun appears always before them. This spiritual Sun shines not only upon the angels, but is the source of life to the souls of men, and vivifies them in proportion as their souls are opened to its influx.

In all things, great and small, says Swedenborg, there exist end, cause, and effect. In the largest sense the spiritual Sun is end, the spiritual world cause, and the natural universe effect. Diversity exists in effects in proportion as they are remote from first causes, but in the Divine Being all things are in infinite harmony and unity. The sun of our solar system is composed of pure elementary fire, and, being material, is therefore dead in itself;

but receiving impulsion from the spiritual sun, to which it corresponds, spiritual forces flowing from that sun are conveyed (clothed in material forms) to every mundane thing. The end or object of creation being its eternal conjunction or marriage with the Creator, there is in every, even the least thing, an inborn tendency to this result, and the *uses* of all created things ascend by "*Degrees*" up to the Creator, from whence they came.

In Part III. Swedenborg explains what are these degrees of relationship between God, Man and Nature. The spiritual world, he declares, is a real, habitable world: the angels have air to breathe, ground to walk upon, and all other necessities of purified man. But the qualities of these things differ in degree in the three heavens. The air the celestial angels breathe is purer and more infilled with Divine life than the atmosphere of the spiritual and the natural heavens. Hence there are three atmospheres there, answering to our "aura, ether and air," and related thereto by correspondence. The basis of the Law of Correspondences is the doctrine of degrees, which are of two sorts, viz. : discrete and continuous. Continuous degrees are as the gradations existing between light and shade, obscurity and clearness, thick and thin, heat and cold,

or between the variety of things of the same species, and with these we are pretty familiar. Discrete degrees are the gradations which exist between end, cause and effect, and to Swedenborg are we indebted for bringing to light this lost knowledge, this interpreter of Dame Nature's Arcana. The discrete degrees of ends, causes and effects, are discoverable everywhere, end producing cause, and cause resulting in effect; yet each is distinct as the steps of a ladder. In successive order the first degree, or end, is highest, and effects lowest; and in simultaneous order the first is the inmost, and the last outermost. But the lowest, or ultimate degree is the continent and basis of the other two. There are three infinite and uncreated degrees in God, which are Love, Wisdom and Use, and these are represented by three degrees in the soul of man, the celestial, spiritual and natural, which are separate, like three storeys of a house. These discrete degrees are in man from birth, and it is intended that each in its order should be opened to Divine influx. In proportion as this takes place, man is created in the image and likeness of God, and is eternally conjoined to Him. If the celestial and also the spiritual degree be not opened, the man is merely natural and sensual, and theoretically, if not ac-



tually, not far above a beast: hence the distinction between man and beasts lies in the possession by the former and not by the latter of a spiritual and celestial degree of mind. If the higher faculties of the soul are open, the natural mind acts as a reagent for Divine purposes, but if not, it acts contrary. Thus the process of regeneration implies an actual retroversion of the natural mind. The origin of evil lies in the abuse by man of his two faculties—liberty and rationality, which, in a perverted mind, are used to confirm evils and fables, whence they become part of the character, remain after death, and pass to children by the law of hereditary transmission of qualities. All evils, both hereditary and acquired, reside in the natural mind, which is thus diametrically opposed to heaven, and is, in fact, a little hell. In short, “The science of degrees manifests that all things of man’s mind, or of his will and understanding, are included in his actions or works, just as visible and invisible things are included in a seed, fruit, or egg.

How the universe was created, Swedenborg describes in Part IV. He ridicules the theory that creation issued out of nothing; since, says he, and truly enough, *ex nihilo, nihil fit!* The universe was, *teste* Swedenborg, created by God from Him-

self, by means of the spiritual sun and its atmospheres and the natural sun and its atmospheres. By way of illustration, Swedenborg refers to a fact now well-accredited in scientific circles, that a sphere of exhalations is continually emitted from the bodies of men, animals, plants, and even minerals; the emissions are immensely voluminous and extend to a great distance; they are composed of the finest and purest substances of the bodies from which they exhale, are material, although invisible, and are active or inert in proportion to their distance from their source. The perfume of flowers and the attraction of the magnet are two out of innumerable instances that may be cited. By the Laws of Correspondences Swedenborg discloses the existence of spheres of an exactly analogous description emanating from the spiritual bodies of men and angels. These spheres are composed of affections and thoughts which in their ultimate spiritual form are the substances of which the spiritual body is framed. Consequently the characteristic quality of each person is actually projected, as it were, into the society in which he moves, and it is this, says Swedenborg, which gives rise to the impressions, either favourable or the reverse, which often mark the entrance of a stranger into our midst.

Herein also lies an explanation of some wonderful phenomena exhibited in mesmerism and spiritism. Carrying the analogy higher, Swedenborg discovers the spiritual sun and its atmospheres to be the operative energy of the Divine Being spreading itself out and infilling with life the least items of Creation's work. The sun's three atmospheres, which correspond to the aura, ether, and air of the natural world, serve analogous uses, *i.e.*, they convey in an accommodated form the Divine life to every angel, and sustain all things in their proper form by pressure. The three atmospheres are discretely separated from each other; connected together not by continuity but contiguity, and in proportion as they are remote from their source they become, relatively speaking, inert, and form fixed substances corresponding to the water, rock, earth, and other elementary materials which, some philosophers maintain, are formed out of our earth's atmosphere. In no sense, however, are these substances Divine; they simply contain the Divine life within them as the secret source of their subsistence. And creation was not a work of time, since the Divine acts by instantaneous operation, not successive steps. Then Swedenborg shows that there is a secret endeavour in earthy matters to re-

produce, and this endeavour runs through all the range of created things up to man, in whom all the various issues blend. Everything in creation, however mean, has its human use; all these uses together form three principal uses, which are: (1) for sustaining and nourishing the body, (2) for perfecting the rational principle, and (3) for conjoining the soul to God. These three, Swedenborg persists, are one and indivisible, for "a man cannot be conjoined to the Lord unless he be spiritual, nor can he be spiritual unless he be rational, nor rational unless his body be in a sound state." Truly this is a new rendering of the maxim, *mens sana in corpore sano*! By what has been said our readers will have been prepared for the statement that evil uses, *i.e.*—"those things which destroy the rational principle and prevent man from becoming spiritual"—are not traceable to Divine sources, but originated with hell by human misuse of Divine life. Hell, like heaven, is connected with this world by correspondence, and wherever here there are evil minds or noxious things, there in hell is the source of their subsistence. As all forms of animal and vegetable life derive their origin by influx from the spiritual sun, and nothing but their material clothing from the sun of nature, the mode in which the good be-

comes evil and the true becomes false is by the passage of the sun's rays into perverted receptacles, just as the sunlight passing into a stagnant ditch originates an evil smell. No one, declares Swedenborg, can fail to conclude when he studies the visible things of nature, that they must have had a Divine origin.

In Part V. he describes the "Creation of Man," but it is man as a soul, and not as a structure built up of "cakes and ale." Referring to Genesis i. 26, he says, "The image of God there means the Divine wisdom, and the likeness of God the Divine love, wisdom being no other than the image of love, for love makes itself to be seen and known by wisdom. . . . The likeness and image of God appears plainly in the angels: love shines forth from within in their faces, and wisdom in their beauty, and beauty is the form of their love: this I have seen and know. A man cannot be an image of God according to His likeness unless God be in him and be his life from his inmost part."

The genesis of man consists, therefore, in his formation into an angel having the image and likeness of God; the process is gradual, and proceeds by stages, which are typified by the six days of creation. In order that he may be capable of receiving the Divine life, he is provided with a soul.

which is an organised substantial form, composed of the purest spiritual substances. It is an organism and a form, or how else, asks Swedenborg, can it receive and retain substances of surpassing potency and energy flowing from the Divine Being? The soul has two divisions: the will is the dwelling-place of love and the birth-place of the affections; the understanding is the habitation of wisdom and the source of the thoughts. The love and wisdom thus received is the very life and existence of the man. It passes by discrete degrees into the brains, from thence into the heart and lungs, the nerves and blood, and through the blood into every atom of the body. Thus, strictly speaking, the quality of the life existing in first principles in the mind determines the quality of the life of the body. And the heart and lungs correspond to the will and understanding, so that an examination of the uses of the heart and lungs in the animal economy will, under analogical principles, illustrate the ways and means of spiritual existence to the comprehension even of the natural and doubtful mind. How there exists a marriage between heart and lungs, whence are derived all the great and little uses of the whole physique, and how by a similar unity of will and understanding under Divine aus-

pices the soul ceases to be sensual, to creep, to vegetate, to go on all fours, and ultimately stands forth an angel-man, Swedenborg most adequately describes. We have already exceeded due limits however, and must pass on, simply observing that Darwin's theory of Natural Selection, Huxley's protoplasm, Tyndall's Heat and Light, Herbert Spencer's Sociology, would be all the better if infused with a little of Swedenborg's *Divine Love and Wisdom*.

We next find Swedenborg at Gottenburg in 1765, and while waiting there for a ship to convey him to England, he became acquainted with Dr. Beyer, a very learned and eminent divine, who, having heard much concerning the Swedish seer of an astonishing nature, was surprised to greet an affable, scholarly gentleman, without any signs of hallucination about him at all. And when Swedenborg after dinner gave *viva voce* an account of his doctrines, Dr. Beyer was so much impressed that he begged Swedenborg to put the discourse in writing that he might consider it carefully. This Swedenborg did, and the acquaintance thus begun ripened afterwards into a close intimacy. Beyer proved a firm and fast friend, studied Swedenborg's works carefully, and held to them through much obloquy and persecution. He also

spent thirteen years in the compilation of an elaborate index to these works, but did not live to see it published.

Arrived in London, Swedenborg repaired at once to his bookseller's, and was disappointed to find that his works had not met with a very ready sale. This he ascribed to the hostility of the clergy to new doctrines. He did not stay long in London, since we find him back in Amsterdam in the latter part of 1765, where in a short time he published another work, *The Apocalypse Revealed*. As in former cases, he distributed copies of this work amongst those who he thought would read it, and particularly to universities and distinguished persons in England, Holland, Germany, Sweden, and France. His old friends, Mr. Hart, of Poppin's-court, and Mr. Lewis, of Paternoster-row, advertised the work for sale by handbill at 15s. per copy.

The Apocalyptic mysteries seem to have engaged Swedenborg's attention for nearly ten years. In his *Last Judgment* he refers to an *Apocalypsis Explicata* which he has then (1759) in hand, but after proceeding with it as far as Rev. xix. 10, he discontinued that work, for reasons which do not appear, and prepared a much more concise commentary—the *Apocalypsis Revelata*, which he published in 1766. The un-



finished work was issued posthumously; first in Latin (4 vols. 4to), in 1793, and in English (6 vols.) in 1815. It is chiefly distinguished from the later book by its more elaborate and detailed analysis of the Sacred text, and it has, therefore, been thought that Swedenborg stopped the *Apocalypsis Explicata* because of its bulkiness.

*The Apocalypse Revealed*, as issued by the Swedenborg Society is in two volumes large octavo. To Swedenborg the "Revelation of St. John the Divine," was the prophecy of that Last Judgment and End of the World, or Church, which, he maintains, took place in Hades in 1757, and which, as already mentioned, he claims to describe as a divinely-appointed eyewitness. What John saw was seen by him when "in the spirit:" he does not explain, he simply describes; he is the appointed seer and recorder of this most mystical of scriptural prophecies, but neither he nor his contemporaries seem to have understood the matter aright. The exposition of the mysteries must, it is maintained, follow, not precede, the fulfilment of the prophecy, and the expositor must be a seer like John, actually witnessing "in the spirit," the events to be narrated. So much, therefore, may be said to be in favour of Swedenborg's claim to

be the divinely-commissioned revealer of the great lessons of the apocalypse. For the rest we have only the internal evidence afforded by his book and the testimony as to his special capacity and fitness for the post: he also renounces entirely any originality in the composition of the *Apocalypse Revealed*, for "what man," he asks, "can draw such things from himself?" The merest analysis of his work would fill a good-sized pamphlet; suffice it to say, then, that it is an exposition,—Dr. Wilkinson expressively terms it "translation into spirit," of the internal sense of every phrase in the Book of Revelations. But little attention is paid to the "letter;"—to orthodox divines so big with mystic importance and awful threat. Under Swedenborg's pen the Apocalypse becomes a narrative of the decline and fall of the Christian Church (typified by the Seven Churches of Asia); its exploration in the light of heaven; its judgment and final consummation, as already described in speaking of *The Last Judgment*. Then follows a description of the Second Coming of the Lord, and the descent of the New Jerusalem. The Second Advent is declared to be not a personal appearance in the clouds of our sky, but a revealing of the Glorified Word in and through the clouds and obscurities peculiar to its literal

sense. And the Holy City New Jerusalem is not a new capital of Judæa, but a new system of doctrine for the Church, wherein the Lord alone is worshipped, the love of the neighbour supersedes the love of self. Charity is married to faith, the Word of God is an open book, enlightening, yet not contradicting the Arts and Sciences, the light and life of heaven flow uninterruptedly down into the souls of men, religion and business are reconciled, God walks and talks once more with man, and Paradise is Regained. It is the regenerative process of the individual man applied to the Church Universal; but the outward forms of things are not necessarily disturbed, and time and space are not elements to be considered. The most astounding revolutions which have taken place in human affairs, both internal and external, are those which have proceeded peacefully. No portion of Scripture has been the subject of so much debate and perplexity as the Apocalypse. Manifestly the matter is one of Interpretation, and many are the attempts which have been made—some of them furnished with a considerable armoury of scriptural and historical argument, to fasten on certain potentates, nations and denominations, the political and doctrinal application of the Sacred text. And when, from various

causes, some of these attempts have come to an untimely end, the controversy has been renewed over a rearrangement of surviving fragments. It is a safe presumption that an interpretation of Scripture which kindles religious animosities, quarrels with the plain facts of Science, and fills timid people with apprehensions for the momentary safety of their persons and property, is out of harmony somehow with the benign purposes of Holy Writ. The system of interpretation, which Swedenborg uses, gives him one advantage over other commentators, inasmuch as it raises him above all the turmoil and bustle of party politics; enables him to plod peacefully through the work he has in hand, and produce a book which, at least, is full of practical wisdom. A recent report issued by the Swedenborg Society intimates their intention to publish a cheap edition of *The Apocalypse Revealed*, to be offered gratuitously to students and teachers of religion of all classes.

In April, or May, 1766, Swedenborg again visits England, partly to see what effect his new work would have on the Anglican clergy, and partly to introduce to the English Government his method for ascertaining longitude at sea by lunar observations. It appears the Government had been offering since 1714 very large sums

for a reliable means of determining the longitude at sea, and one John Harrison had in 1735 submitted a time-piece which he had constructed for the purpose. After a wearisome delay, an Act was passed in 1765 awarding £20,000 to Harrison for his invention, one half on his explaining its construction, and the other on showing that the chronometer could be made by other hands. Our readers will remember that Swedenborg in his early scientific days had strongly interested himself in this subject: in 1721 he issued a treatise *On a Method of ascertaining the Longitude of Places, on Land or at Sea, by Lunar Observations*, and this, probably by the advice of friends, he republished at Amsterdam early in 1766, sending copies to all the leading Academies of Science in Europe. In a report to the Stockholm Academy, dated 10th September, 1766, he relates his interview with Lord Morton on the 19th of May, "who told me that on the 24th the Board of Longitude (which is a committee of select learned men) would meet at the Admiralty House and decide about Harrison's chronometer. There I met the Board, and delivered to them ten copies of my pamphlet, which the secretary received and laid on the table. The Board did not believe there was any method of finding the longitude by the moon, and resolved

that Mr. Harrison should receive the proposed premium. I have since been informed that several learned astronomers have approved of my method and are now working out ephemerides to bring the same into effect," and he concludes with the observation that "time will show" whether Harrison's chronometer would be workable or not.

This is certainly the letter of a man of business, and it is a pity that our information as to this interesting episode of Swedenborg's life is so meagre, and that we are left to conjecture what impression the aged seer made upon the English *savans* whom he met. Did they know aught of his seership, and wonder how the pen that wrote *De Cælo et Inferno*, or *Apocalypsis Revelata*, could so lucidly discuss knotty scientific problems? Or had fame, which in those days marched slowly, not yet stirred the London air with Swedenborg's name?

In August we find him at Wapping preparing to start for Sweden, and the night before sailing he put up at the King's Arms, in Wellclose-square, kept by Mr. Bergstrom, a Swede, who supplies many interesting particulars concerning Swedenborg's habits and appearance. "I was personally acquainted with him," says Bergstrom, "he frequently called on me, and once

lived ten weeks in my house, during which time I observed nothing in him but what was reasonable and bespoke the gentleman." Bergstrom and a Mr. Springer, then Swedish Consul for England, and an intimate acquaintance of Swedenborg's, were conversing together at the inn on the night above referred to, Swedenborg having retired to rest early. Hearing him talking, they went to his chamber, and peeping through a little window in the door, saw him in one of his visions. They describe him as lying in bed, with his hands raised to heaven, his body trembling, engaged in earnest conversation with some invisible beings. The vision ceasing, they went in, and inquired if he was ill. He said, "No, but he had had a long discourse with the heavenly friends," and was in a great perspiration. His clothing being in the ship, he borrowed a clean shirt, retired to rest again, and slept till morning. It is a curious fact that Swedenborg's voyages to Sweden were almost invariably quick and safe passages, so much so that the captains were wont to welcome him, and one of them, Captain Harrison, said "Swedenborg might sail with him gratis whenever he pleased, for never since he was a mariner had he such voyages as when the seer was on board." And when bidding Bergstrom good-bye, Swedenborg

at this visit predicted that "with God's help we shall be in Stockholm this day week at two o'clock." This happened, so the captain afterwards informed Springer, exactly as foretold. Springer also testifies to some remarkable instances personal to himself of the Seer's spiritual prescience: "All that he told me respecting my deceased friends and enemies, and the secrets that were between us, almost exceeds belief. . . . He explained to me in what manner the peace was concluded between Sweden and the King of Prussia. . . . and who were the three personages of whom I made use in that affair, which, nevertheless, was an entire secret between them and me.' Also of a political quarrel with one Count Ekeblad which had nearly led to a duel, but was compromised, and a mutual promise made never to mention it. At another time Ekeblad tried to bribe Springer with 10,000 rix-dalers, and the sum and all circumstances were related to Springer by Swedenborg, who stated he had heard them from the Count (then recently deceased) in the other world.

About this time Dr. Oetinger, Bishop of Murhard, Wurtemberg, became an ardent admirer of Swedenborg, and translated some of his works into German, for which he was much persecuted ; the Privy Council even issuing a decree forbidding him to



entertain Swedenborg, should the latter visit Wurtemberg. But Oetinger, who was a Behmenite and a pietist—a seeker after the occult and mysterious, had some doubts of Swedenborg's credentials, and questioned him as to the absence of signs and miracles; whether he had spoken with the apostles, and how it was that he, a natural philosopher became a seer. In his reply (Nov. 11th, 1766), Swedenborg declares that miracles are useless as they do not produce internal conviction; that if the Lord were now to appear in the sky attended with angels and trumpets, it would have no greater effect than His miracles had on the Jews who crucified Him; that *illustration* (by which we presume he means interior perception), is more effectual to work conviction than miracles; that he had conversed with Paul and John, also with Moses, and very frequently with Luther, and that he was divinely led from natural to spiritual philosophy, because spiritual truths could only be rationally understood when viewed from their natural bases. "Moreover the Lord has given unto me a love of spiritual truth, not with any view to honour or profit, but merely for the sake of truth itself."

Whilst at Stockholm Swedenborg resided in a small six-roomed house which he had built in the Sudermalm in a retired

and almost solitary situation. At the back of the house was a large garden elegantly laid out, in which Swedenborg used to take much delight—spending a large sum annually upon it. He had only two servants, the gardener and his wife, to whom he gave all the produce of the garden, and who lived in the house and rendered him the merely nominal services he required of them. A principal feature of the garden was a handsome summer-house, where Swedenborg sat and wrote, and received his visitors in fine weather. Here was a small hand-organ, on which he doubtless used to play, and it is probable he was fond of music. He afterwards built two other summer-houses, one of them after the model of a structure he had admired at a nobleman's seat in England. In a corner of the garden he had a "maze" constructed ; at the end of this was a door which, when opened, discovered another door, with a window in it. A visitor going to open this door would fancy that through its window he saw a green arcade, in which a bird's cage was suspended ; but the window was a mirror. One day a little maid tripped into Swedenborg's summer-house and begged he would show her an angel ! "Certainly, my dear. Come with me," said he, smiling kindly as he led her by the hand through the garden

and its labyrinth, until they came to the secret window, when he said, "Look through this window and you will see an angel." The little one looked, and saw—her own face in a mirror.

Swedenborg had a very hardy constitution, and suffered but seldom from even the most ordinary "ills that flesh is heir to." He once had a toothache, but refused to take any remedy, saying the pain was induced by the presence near him of certain hypocritical spirits, and would disappear when they departed. He relates instances of ailments and sufferings, some of them extremely painful, which he was told were induced by malignant spirits who sought his destruction. When asked why he conversed with such wicked creatures, he said, "Those whom the Lord defends might be encompassed by all the powers of hell, and suffer no injury. . . . so that I have no fear in conversing with the very worst of the infernal crew. . . . Disorderly lusts and passions vitiate the blood in its essence. . . . and cause disease and death. Did man live in order he would enjoy health to old age, when he would shed his earthly frame without suffering and enter heaven at once as an angel." Like many sedentary men Swedenborg had a delicate stomach, and suffered in the later years of his life from stone. He paid no atten-

tion to day and night. "When I am sleepy," he said, "I go to bed!" Sometimes he lay in a trance for several days; his servants occasionally heard him arguing loudly, or weeping bitterly, but if questioned he explained that these were states of trial in which he was tempted or shocked by evil spirits. On one occasion he did not rise from bed for so long a time that his servants (whom he had ordered not to disturb him) began to be frightened, and thought of calling in his relatives, but the next day Swedenborg was himself again, and told them he had been quite well, and had wanted for nothing. The gardener's wife relates that one day after his dinner (usually bread soaked in boiling milk), she went into his room and saw that his eyes shone with a bright flaming appearance, at which she exclaimed "In God's name, sir, what is the matter? You have a fearful look!" Swedenborg replied, "Do not be frightened. The Lord has so disposed my eyes that spirits can look through upon this world." When he conversed with good spirits his countenance was calm, radiant, and pleasing, whereas when with evil ones his face wore a sorrowful and pained expression. Towards the end of his life he became somewhat absent-minded, but only to a very slight extent. His domestic habits

and circumstances were neat and simple in his journeys he made no parade, and encumbered himself with no "conveniences" or servants. His library consisted only of the Bible—of which he had four editions in Hebrew, a Greek Testament, and four Latin Bibles, and the indexes to his own works. In money matters he was at once frugal and liberal, generous and prudent. He always sold his books at less than cost price, and gave them away freely. He neither gave to beggars, nor lent his money, all of which he required, he said, for travelling and printing.

As may be imagined, Swedenborg had numerous visitors, to whom he was always sociable and kind, whatever the nature of their varied inquiries. Some consulted him as to the state of their relatives or friends after death; widows sought to know how their husbands fared. Others besought him to divine where lay certain property which had been lost, stolen, or hid. To such mere curiosity-mongers he almost invariably refused gratification, urged them to lay aside their searches, and gave much salutary advice. He was shrewd enough always to have one of his servants in the room, and to insist on the conversation being in Swedish, lest what was said might be distorted out of doors. On one occasion a young man went to the

house with the purpose of assassinating Swedenborg. He was met at the door by the gardener's wife, who, having a presentiment of something being wrong, told the man Swedenborg was out, but he would not believe her, and rushed through the house into the garden. But a nail in the lock of the door caught in his cloak, and in the endeavour to disengage it his naked sword fell from under the cloak to the ground. So much confused was he at this *contretemps* that he made his escape with all speed, and, so the story goes, was afterwards killed in a duel. There is no evidence that he knew anything of Swedenborg; it was doubtless an instance of that homicidal mania towards distinguished persons which now and then occurs.

The Rev. N. Collin, a Swedish clergyman, who paid a visit to Swedenborg in 1766, says that "at that time he was a great object of public attention in the capital, and his extraordinary character was a frequent topic of discussion." The aged Swedenborg received Collin very kindly, and after conversing together for some hours, Collin requested as a great favour that an interview might be procured between himself and a brother recently deceased. But Swedenborg stated that communication with the spiritual world, except

for cogent reasons, was not granted. And when Collin confessed his desire sprang from brotherly affection, and a curiosity regarding the after life, he was told that was not sufficient, "that if any important spiritual or temporal concern had been involved he would have solicited permission from those angels who regulate such matters." On another occasion Bishop Hallenius, the successor to Swedenborg's father, paid the Seer a visit. The conversation turned on sermons, and Swedenborg said to the bishop, *inter alia*, "You insert things that are false in yours." On this the bishop told the gardener (from whom the anecdote comes) to retire, but Swedenborg commanded him to remain. The conversation was then continued, and each referred to the Scriptures in support of his assertions. At the termination of the visit Swedenborg severely censured the bishop for avarice and various unjust actions. "You have," said he "already prepared yourself a place in hell, but I predict that you will some months hence be attacked with a grievous illness during which time the Lord will seek to convert you. If you then open your heart to His holy inspiration your conversion will take place. When this happens write to me for my theological works, and I will send them to you." As

Swedenborg predicted, so it happened. Some months after one of the Bishop's officials called on Swedenborg and stated that he, the bishop, had passed through a very severe illness, but was quite recovered and altogether a changed man "doing good everywhere, and returning three and fourfold what he had unfairly acquired." Hallenius ever afterwards openly "maintained that Swedenborg's writings were a most precious treasure given for the welfare of mankind."

In 1768 Swedenborg again comes to London. He was now 80 years of age, and his friend M. Robsahm meeting him in his carriage riding out of Stockholm expressed surprise at his taking such a journey at his age, but Swedenborg cheerily replied, "I have yet another voyage of this kind to make." What he did in London and how long or where he stayed is not known, but he was back again in Amsterdam in November, when he issued his work "*On Conjugal Love and its Chaste Delights, and on Adulterous Love and its Insane Pleasures*, by Emanuel Swedenborg, a Swede." This was the first time he had affixed his name to any work since he became a Seer; the occasion of his now doing so was that he desired to take



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upon himself all responsibility for the statements and views contained in this work.

One of the most striking doctrines enunciated by Swedenborg in his work on *Heaven and Hell*, is that which regards heaven as essentially "a home," and the angels simply as men and women, perfected, but in every respect human; "the spirits of just men made perfect"—living together in God-appointed wedlock and domestic felicity. In the present volume this doctrine is fully worked out. The author maintains that the distinctions of sex are eternal and ineradicable; spiritually, mentally, and *thence* constitutionally, man is male and woman female hereafter as here, and the love of the sex remains after death. Instead of our word "conjugal" (from *conjugo*, "to yoke together") Swedenborg introduces a more expressive term, "conjugal" (formed from *conjugium*, "a marriage"). True conjugal love is the union of one man with one woman as to first principles, and is only possible with true Christians. It derives its origin from the Lord, in whom the male principle Wisdom, and the female principle Love, are blended in Infinite and Eternal Marriage. In the highest sense man represents and is a recipient of Wisdom; woman represents and receives Love from the Lord;

and as in the Divine these are infinitely one, and omniproductive, so it is divinely ordained that man and woman should be one Humanity, bearing the image and likeness of their Maker. They are two that in freedom and from mutual attraction they may become one, even from first principles to ultimates. True marriage love arises, therefore, in heaven, and passes downwards and outwards until it culminates in the conjugal bond with its innumerable felicities. In the highest or celestial marriage an effort towards union springs first from the inbred attraction of Man's Wisdom for Woman's Love, and *vice versâ*; whence come the fruits of celestial peace and joy. A similar attraction exists between Goodness and Truth, Charity and Faith, whence is derived spiritual harmony. Similarly the Intellect unites itself to the Emotions, and mental potency results, with its wondrous brood of Arts, Sciences, Literature, Poetry, and Invention. From these celestial, spiritual and mental marriages descend the innumerable delights which flow from a well-ordered marriage in the world: every such union contributing to the perfection of humanity and the glory of God. Obversely from the perversion of these higher unions spring all marital coldness, discord, hate, separation, divorce: all social impurity,

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all profane, adulterous love, and their horrid hell-born train.

Unable to find in his time examples of truly conjugal love, Swedenborg applied in prayer to the Lord, and was supplied with an angel guide, who conducted him into the society of those in heaven who had lived in the golden, silver, copper, and later ages of the world. From these he learns the nature of truly conjugal love, and is enabled to trace how breaches of marital purity were the rocks upon which nations and Churches broke up, and how polygamy and its relations coincided in origin with that almost utter extinction of religious life which preceded the advent of the Messiah into the world. These matters are narrated in several "Memorable relations," of exceeding beauty and suggestiveness.

Swedenborg next explains that passage Luke xx. 34, *et seq.*; which seems to contradict his doctrine of angelic wedlock. But he explains it as referring not to the corporeal union our Lord's Sadducean auditors understood to mean marriage, but to that spiritual conjunction between man and his Lord, which is regeneration, and which must be begun here or not at all. Moreover, all in whom that heavenly marriage *has* taken place are in mystic conjunction already with the partner of

their eternal joys—they may not meet here *in propria personâ*, but when death rends asunder the veil which obscured their vision, they mutually recognise, approach, and are conjoined to each other—no more to part. Such marriages are celebrated in heaven, but the celebration is but the confirmation of a bond which has always existed. And connecting the passage Luke xx. 34 with others which teach that marriage is of eternal duration, it seems to need some such interpretation. For surely those who here are enforced celibates, living the tiresome solitude of bachelor or spinster are not so to continue for aye !

Swedenborg's unimpassioned descriptions of the loves of the angels are so full of romantic suggestions that it is to us a matter of surprise so few modern romance writers have dug here for their materials. In England, Mrs. M. B. Horton, Mrs. Hume Rothery, and in America, T. S. Arthur, Miss E. S. Phelps, Chauncey Giles, and some other charming writers have rendered some of Swedenborg's views into popular tales. In France, Balzac, in his novels, *Louis Lambert* and *Séraphitus Séraphita*, Charles Baudelaire in his *Fleurs du Mal*, and Théophile Gautier in his *Spirite*, draw largely upon Swedenborg's theories, but, as may be expected, the theories are tra-

vestied and sensualised past all recognition. It remained for Wilkie Collins, who makes the romance of matrimony his specialité, to fill up the void, and he has done so, to all appearance with considerable fidelity, in a serial story entitled "The Two Destinies," now appearing in *Temple Bar*. Swedenborg's theories are represented by one Dame Dermody, who was strongly possessed by the faith that her (deceased) husband was always near her—her guide by day and guardian by night. "Holding this faith she was in no respect influenced by those grossly material ideas of modern growth which associate the presence of spiritual beings with clumsy conjuring tricks and monkey antics performed on tables and chairs. Dame Dermody's nobler superstition formed an integral part of her religious convictions—convictions which had long since found their chosen resting-place in the mystic doctrines of Emanuel Swedenborg. The only books which she read were the works of the Swedish Seer. She mixed up Swedenborg's teachings on angels and departed spirits, on love to one's neighbour and purity of life, with wild fancies and kindred beliefs of her own." The Dame was by birth and breeding a lady; in her youth she had married, from love, a labouring man, and found in the union perfect hap-

piness. Hence she regards with complacency, fosters, encourages, and prophesies respecting the linked destinies of her niece, a bailiff's daughter, and the son of the bailiff's employer. The novel describes the sympathetic unity of these young souls, sustained amidst years of enforced separation by parent first, and subsequently by a variety of circumstances, all of which provide the author with startling situations, which he depicts with his usual skill.

*Apropos* of marriages in heaven we may here state that Swedenborg, in his latter years, used to say that a wife awaited him in the spiritual world,—not Emerentia Polheim, but the Countess Gyllenborg, widow of the President of the Royal College of Mines, to which Swedenborg was Assessor. According to Mr. White, the countess survived her husband ten years; she passed away in 1769, aged fifty-five. "She was no ordinary woman. She published in Stockholm, in 1756, a quarto volume of 628 pages, entitled *Marie Båsta Del* (Mary's Better Part), and in 1760 a second volume, of 1,180 pages—both anonymously. The volumes are composed of meditations on Scripture, and religious counsel in prose and verse, and reveal a mind well-versed in theology and softened in a pious, poetic, and mystic spirit. They contain no tincture of Swedenborgianism,

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but one may infer from their tenour that she would offer no resistance to the heavenly doctrines, but probably receive them with hearty welcome."

But to return. Swedenborg further asserts that truly married partners remain together in happy oneness to eternity. Those who have not made such fortunate selections, but who live honest, holy lives, making the best of their position and each other's comfort, meet again after death, but gradually finding that their union is not interior, they separate, and in due course meet with suitable partners provided by the Lord from creation. No children result from angelic wedlock, but, instead, there is continual augmentation of mutual love, love to the Lord, knowledge, wisdom and power and felicity.

But "truly conjugal love is at this day so rare," says our author, that its existence is scarcely known. It originates in the marriage of goodness and truth, and corresponds to the mystic union of the Lamb with the Church, and is synonymous with regeneration. "It is celestial, spiritual, holy, pure, and clean above every other love imparted by the Lord to the angels and the men of the Church." It is the base and continent of all loves, but belongs only to those who love the Lord and the precepts of His Word;

“ Who know what's right ; not only so,  
But always *practise* what they know.”

To Swedenborg the word marriage was writ large throughout all creation. Everywhere he perceived duality dissolving into unity and reproducing. Every man is a form of truth ; every woman a form of goodness ; and their union typifies the marriage of these twin elements of godliness. In the abstract sense, truth and goodness are never separated ; let them be united in fact and in practice, and all Creation becomes once more harmonious. In true marriage the man loves primarily the goodness in the soul of his wife, and she loves the wisdom in his. The attraction is then irresistible, and ultimately all impediments to perfect coalition are swept away. In heaven such pairs, says Swedenborg, actually appear at a distance as one angel.

In the next chapter Swedenborg explains fully the nature of the mystic conjunction between the Church and Christ, a union of which the Word testifies in every part. Moreover, the Bible is the medium of such conjunction, because it is essentially the Lord Himself. So far, then, as man receives and appropriates in daily life the precepts of the Word, the Lord builds up the Church in him, and so far is he pos-



essed of true conjugal love. The Church derives its existence and doctrine from the Lord solely through the Word, and the test of its condition at any time is the accordance of its doctrines with the direct teachings of Scripture. The state of a Church which has falsified the truths of the Word and worshipped more than one Deity is symbolised in the prophecies by adultery.

Upon the subject of chastity the author makes some unique observations. He declares that neither infants, nor adults, nor celibates, nor vestal virgins, *as such*, are truly chaste, but only those who deliberately reject all impurities of life and thought *as sins against God*—thus from religious principle. Marriage is better than celibacy, and the marriage of one man with one wife upon truly conjugal principles alone constitutes essential chastity.

In the next two chapters Swedenborg discloses some beautiful arcana respecting the wondrous process by which a conjugal pair become indissolubly one—a process which, commencing in the first days of marriage, continues to eternity. The wife is the recipient first of conjugal love from the Lord, and through her it is transmitted to the husband. Hence all his affection for her is fed and inspired by this holy fountain of love in her soul. Her affection

is constant : his has alternations ; but " a faithful bridegroom is affected solely by his bride." In all their vocations the duties and tastes of wife and husband are distinct ; the duties of the wife cannot properly be performed by the husband, nor *vice versa* ; thus individuality is maintained. Possessing within them the essentials of youth, beauty, strength, their love never fades nor cools—it rather increases in exquisiteness, purity, and efficacy, and the older they grow the younger do they become. " The states of this love are innocence, peace, tranquillity, inmost friendship, full confidence, and a mutual desire of mind and heart to do every good to each other. And the states derived from these are blessedness, satisfactions, delights, and pleasantnesses, and from the eternal enjoyment of these is derived heavenly felicity—but these things can only exist in the marriage of one man with one wife."

Physiologists teach that the human body undergoes changes which within specified periods amount even to an entire reconstruction. Swedenborg announces a similar law and process for the spiritual body, and no more potent source of such changes is there, he says, than that resulting from the commerce of marriage. The husband partakes of the amiability, gentleness, purity of his wife : she likewise

acquires strength, solidarity, wisdom. Their spiritual constitutions daily become more noble, beautiful, godlike, and the *physique* even frequently participates in the benefit. Children born of such parents inherit the faculty, if sons, of becoming wise, and, if daughters, of loving the things which wisdom teaches; they start on life's pilgrimage well equipped. Some of the general results of conjugal love enumerated by Swedenborg are a constant growth in true wisdom, the happiness of dwelling together perpetually increases, friendship, unity, concord reign at home and abroad, everything is estimated according to its eternal value, and the love of being useful is ever stimulated. But all this is reversed where the marriage is ill-assorted.

Descending from these sublime subjects, Swedenborg now discusses the causes of coldness, separation, and divorce; also of apparent love, friendship, &c., in marriage. The causes of coldness enumerated are various: some internal, proceeding from religious differences and deficiencies; others external, such as dissimilarity of mind, manners, or position, love of pre-eminence, low estimate of marriage contract, &c. Causes of separation are vitiated states of mind and body. Adultery alone is the just cause of divorce.

The various causes of accidental and temporary states of coldness are also referred to. Many marriages are the result of mere caprice, mistake, or are mere contracts for the disposition of property. Sooner or later the discovery is made that the union is not a fact, or that it is not of the inner heart, and coldness or disunion threatens with its discomforts and heart-burnings. Then Swedenborg argues that the virtue not possessed should be assumed. For the sake of domestic order, peace, comfort, the care of infants and placing out of adults, of reputation, business, property in hand or heritable, and other causes, justice and prudence urge that external affection should be stimulated and encouraged, "the bonds of matrimony must continue in the world till the decease of one of the parties," the marriage contract is not annulled when it becomes tiresome, and it is best that friendship should continue, when true conjugal love is absent. Surely never was a harder case than Janet's in Auld Robin Gray! yet she sings—

" I gang like a ghaist, and I canna like to spin,  
I dare nae think o' Jamie, for that would be a sin ;  
But I'll do my best a gude wife to be,  
For auld Robin Gray is very kind to me."

Swedenborg regards the formality of betrothal and the ceremonies and fes-

tivities of nuptials as necessary, orderly, and useful. The right of selection belongs to the man : to woman the right of consent, which she should only give after mature deliberation with herself, and her parents or guardians. Consent should be succeeded by solemn betrothal, because thereby the souls of the young couple are first united, and when, after due lapse of time, the nuptials are celebrated religiously and formally, the union becomes complete and orderly. But if marriage be entered into with undue precipitation, conjugal love is destroyed.

To remarriages by widows or widowers Swedenborg sees no obstacles, if the previous unions have been but external. Where partners have dwelt together in conjugal love, the survivor will neither desire nor be willing to enter into a remarriage, unless where the care of young children, a large house and the distractions of business, compel. But polygamy, Swedenborg declares, is utterly impure, heathenish, and corrupt, especially in the Christian Church, which alone possesses true conjugal love. Yet to Mahometans, ancient Jews, and others, who from ignorance or religious beliefs committed polygamy, a different law is applied. Not being in the Church of Christ, they know not its laws, and cannot be justly con-

demned for infraction of those laws. If they worship One God, and act up to their best conceptions of right, they go to a heaven of their own, suited to their "natural" condition, but no polygamist, *as such*, can become spiritual, or enter the Christian's heaven, or associate with its inhabitants.

After describing the character of Jealousy, which, with the good, arises, we are told, from just grief and fear lest the loved one be injured or lost, and with the evil proceeds from hatred, revenge, towards the offender, Swedenborg concludes his treatise on Conjugal Love with a chapter on the Love of Infants. Whilst by the first the Lord provides for the increase of His children, by the love of infants he secures their preservation. The affection for offspring permeates all animal and human natures. The mother is most influenced by the love of infants, which, in an abstract sense, is the love of innocence and peace. As the child grows in stature and knowledge, the nature of this affection suffers change. Those parents who are spiritually married regard their children solely as held in trust from the heavenly Father, and they love them for the sake of, and according to their wisdom, morality, piety, and goodness. If these qualities be absent, then love ceases. On the other hand,

parents who are yoked, but not united, naturally and not spiritually minded, regard their children as their own, and love them according as they agree with their tastes and ambitions; hence pride, self-love, vanity, &c., spring up, and weakness, or even vice, is often excused. The love of infants remains after death, especially with women, and all children who die in infancy are in heaven placed under the care of angels, and educated by them under the direction of the Lord. The process of education is gradual, and consists of the expansion and development of all the powers of the young immortals by the influx of wise and good principles, and the representation of divine things in symbols and picture-parables. Infants are in the innocence of infancy, a negative condition, but this heavenly education brings them to the innocence of wisdom, that second childhood which is the characteristic of the highest angels.

Having completed his treatise on the chaste delights of truly Conjugal Love, Swedenborg proceeds to depict in that cool, simple, philosophic style peculiar to him, the essential nature of *Adulterous Love*, as it exists amongst infernals, and in that region of the unregenerate mind—the carnal and bestial plane—with which, it is said, hell is correspondent. The

editor supplies in an explanatory note a digest of the principles upon which Swedenborg's statements are founded, and this introduction serves, as is doubtless its intention, to check any irrational revulsion of feeling against the author, which the mere mention of some of the topics discussed may excite in the minds of prurient readers. And it is a fact that a large portion of the critical abuse levelled at Swedenborg's head is based upon critiques of this work—some of them so inaccurate as to suggest that the authors suffered from indigestion consequent upon a "cram." Like juries, reviewers are useful, but not immaculate. We have heard somewhere of one who used to read through three or four times the work he was reviewing ere he put pen to paper, but such instances are rare as the blossoming of an aloe, and, when found, deserve to be recorded with scrupulous accuracy, for the delectation of future antiquarians.

Anxious to learn how Swedenborg had so suddenly descended from the high pinnacle of "a religious, blameless life" to retail things improper to be known, we were at the pains to read for ourselves, not for purposes of criticism, but for information only.

The previous treatise dealt with the loves of the angels; this one treats of



the vicious appetites of the "natural man" and the best means by which they may be restrained and modified, where removal or reformation is impossible. Swedenborg speaks of man as "born with a propensity to evils of every kind, derived from his parents, and these reside in his natural man, which of itself is diametrically opposed to the spiritual man. The natural man, with his lusts, ought to be conquered, subdued and inverted; for otherwise the man cannot stir a step towards heaven, but must needs cast himself more and more deeply into hell. The natural man, considered in himself, differs not at all from the nature of beasts—indeed, with regard to his will, to all intents and purposes he is a wild beast." This, then, is the man of whose corruptions, both latent and active, Swedenborg treats. But nowhere do we find levity, indelicacy, grossness, or sensuality in the narration; on the contrary, as a terribly severe rebuke to vice, the work is a support to virtue; no "natural man" could read it unappalled. We are everywhere reminded that—

"Vice is a monster of such frightful mien  
That to be hated needs but to be seen."

In fact, such a book must be estimated according to its purpose, its accuracy, and

its usefulness; not according to the lax notions which rebuke an author who discovers the true nature of vice, while a score of novelists—not *all* of them—Continental—who foul the printing press with pictures of infamy in charming dress, are read with avidity. Swedenborg's purpose, an *exposé* of the terrible nature of adultery and its kindred vices, is good in itself, and those portions which do not seem to fit English character are obviously derived from his experience of Continental society. Those who, as magistrates, physicians, or philanthropists, have become painfully familiar with the various forms of social evil as it exists in the lowest haunts of vice, or in "the best society," are probably best able to judge the accuracy and truthfulness of Swedenborg's portraiture. In one respect, and that the ruling principle of the whole treatise, they would agree with him, since it is the root of the correctest ideas of criminal reform, and its soundness is recognised. Thus Swedenborg maintains that it is the truest wisdom to permit a minor form of social corruption to exist, if thereby a greater evil is obviated, rather than by repressing forcibly all the avenues of criminal passion, convert it from a mild and curable complaint into a consuming fire, which one day bursts all bounds like a volcano, and encompasses

the ruin of the good and virtuous. And there is one other leading proposition of Swedenborg's equally important to be recognised, *i.e.*, that there are degrees even in adulterous love. His definition of adultery agrees with Mat. v. 28. He insists that whoever does not regard this evil as sin in faith and life is not a Christian, neither has he *any* religion. Heaven is closed against those who practise it, for this evil is "profane, infernal, essentially diabolical—as opposite to conjugal love as hell is opposite to heaven." Obviously there are offences against purity not so grievous, and reclamation is possible upon repentance and amendment of life. Others, again, are still less grievous—proceed from ignorance or mal-education, and are but temporary states, out of which the criminal may pass and ultimately become by monogamic marriage and regeneration possessed of that most priceless jewel of the Christian's crown—conjugal love. Very important are the distinctions thus made by Swedenborg, as therein these evils are laid bare to the core, their causes and consequences traced as no other writer has traced them, and the psychopathist and physician are furnished with materials for the treatment of social corruption in all phases. Having given the keys of Swedenborg's position, it is inadvisable, nor

would our readers thank us to pursue the subject further.

Amongst the numerous memorable relations interspersed between the chapters of this work is one in which Swedenborg states that after he had concluded his meditations on conjugal love, and had begun those on adulterous love, suddenly two angels presented themselves, and said, "We have perceived and understood what you have heretofore meditated upon, but the subjects which now occupy your thoughts have for us no meaning or value. Say nothing about them, for they *are* nothing." "But," I replied, "this love on which I am now meditating is not nothing, but something, because it exists." But they said, "How can there be any love which is not from Creation? Conjugal love is from Creation, and joins two who are capable of becoming one. *How can there be a love which divides and separates?* What youth can love any maiden but the one who loves him in return?" On hearing this I asked the angels from which society of heaven they were. They said, "We are from the heaven of innocence. We came infants into this heavenly world, and were educated under the Lord's auspices; and when we came to the maturity of our states, we were joined together in conjugal love in its first spring. We are

now husband and wife, and as we were ignorant of any other love than what is truly nuptial and conjugal, therefore when we were made acquainted with the ideas of your thought concerning a strange love directly opposed to our own, we could not at all comprehend it, and have descended in order to ask you why you meditate on things that cannot be understood?" Swedenborg endeavours to show them that good has its opposite, which is evil, but the explanation only saddened them, and they departed.

Our space precludes a more extended reference to this novel work which, we believe, has no counterpart in literature. It does not strictly belong to Swedenborg's doctrinal system, and has not met with a very cordial or ingenuous reception. It would have been strange had an age which is a practical contradiction of Swedenborg's views met them with a welcome. Perhaps when the world's mood changes it will be willing to confess that the aged Norseman, bachelor as he was, contributed much to the solution of some most difficult social problems when he wrote *De Amore Conjugiali*.

Whilst at Amsterdam on this occasion Swedenborg contracted a close intimacy with one John Christian Cuno, a wealthy, cultured, and pious Amsterdam merchant,

whose autobiography contains much interesting matter concerning the great man's doings at Amsterdam and Cuno's opinion of him—which seems to have been fair, honest, and favourable. Meeting by accident in a bookseller's shop, Cuno was delighted to receive an invitation to Swedenborg's lodgings—some comfortable rooms over a haberdasher's shop, kept by a young couple with a goodly number of children, amongst whom Swedenborg was a great favourite. Cuno says: "He impressed me with the profoundest veneration for the Saviour of the world on whose Divinity his whole system rests. If at times he maintains many palpable errors, and is therefore not to be separated from heretics, yet I do not easily find in him the motives whereby most heretics are misled." Swedenborg's landlady told Cuno their distinguished lodger gave no trouble. "I wish indeed," she said, "he would stay with us as long as he lives. My children will miss him most, for he never goes out but he brings them something nice. The little things are fonder o' him than of me and their father." Cuno had an opportunity of ascertaining that Swedenborg was possessed of an annual income from realised property of 10,000 guilders, besides other moneys. "All his works, printed on large and ex

pensive paper, he gives away, and from his booksellers requires no account; yet they charge him as much as ever they can, and pay themselves pretty well. . . . He lives very sparingly—chocolate and biscuit forming his usual dinner." As to his personal appearance, Cuno affirms "he is indeed, for his years, a marvel of health. Although he is more than twenty years older than I am, I would not venture to run a race with him, for he is still as active upon his feet as a young man." Cuno thought Swedenborg's eyes possessed extraordinary beauty—"Out of his smiling light blue eyes, which he kept fixed on me as we conversed, it always seemed as if truth itself were speaking. Scoffers who came prepared to ridicule the old man, forgot their mockery and listened with mute attention to his conversation about the spiritual world. It was as if his eyes had the power of imposing silence upon every one." He dined out frequently, and was always of sociable and agreeable temper, answering his tormenting questioners with urbanity.

Cuno relates that about this time news reached Amsterdam that Pombal, the Portuguese Reformer, had been hanged by the Bishop of Coimbra. Upon this being told to Swedenborg, he said, "It is not true; he is not hanged. I have seen the

Pope (Clement XIII., recently deceased) and had a joke with him on the business." As the news of the execution was in all the papers Swedenborg's contradiction was discredited, but it was subsequently proved that he was literally correct, and the papers wrongly informed.

Swedenborg now issued at Amsterdam (1769) *A Brief Exposition of the Doctrine of the New Church*, a small treatise, to which he affixed his name, and in a letter to Dr. Beyer (March 1769) he says it shows clearly "the errors of the doctrines of justification by faith alone, and the imputation of the righteousness and merits of Jesus Christ. I have sent," he continues, "this treatise to all the clergy throughout Holland, and I intend to send it to the most eminent in Germany."

He anticipated this little *brochure* would have a somewhat disquieting effect upon the Protestant clergy, and the sequel shows he was correct to some extent. He bespeaks Beyer's assistance in distributing the book amongst the clergy of Gottenburg, but on hearing that the Dean had denounced his writings in the Gottenburg Consistory, he thought it prudent not to push further in that direction lest he might injure Dr. Beyer's position.

In April 1769, Swedenborg journeyed to Paris "with a design," he says, "which



must not be made public beforehand." According to Dr. Wilkinson, this was no other than the publication of a small pamphlet, viz., *The Intercourse between the Soul and the Body*. He had spoken well in his writings of "the noble French nation," and had found many sympathetic readers in France. It may be that he kept his designs secret lest the persecution which had commenced in Sweden should hamper his operations. At Paris he submitted his MS. to M. Chevreuil, censor of the press, requesting permission to publish it, which was granted on the "customary" condition that the title-page should say "printed at *London*" or "*Amsterdam*." To such a subterfuge truth-loving Swedenborg would not stoop, and took his MS. to London. It has been supposed that the work in question was *Vera Christiana Religio*, but this work could hardly have been ready for the press in 1769. There were some rumours (apparently destitute of foundation) that while at Paris he was connected with some secret society of a politico-theologico description, and ordered to quit by the authorities, but this he himself has flatly denied. Again the *Biographie Universelle* alleged that an artist named Elie assisted him pecuniarily and otherwise in his work, but this too has little reliability. From Paris he passed to

London, and at once issued his treatise on *The Intercourse between the Soul and Body*, a small tractate on a very large question. In it he examines the only three hypotheses which can be framed on the subject, viz. (1) Pre-established harmony, or the reciprocal action of the soul and the body—Leibnitz's theory; (2) Physical influx—the Aristotelian or Materialist theory; and (3) Spiritual influx—the Cartesian theory, which Swedenborg adopts. Briefly stated, his theory is, that *God alone lives*, and from Him, as from a sun, life flows into all created forms, from the highest angel down to the soil of the earth; each succeeding formation enclosing and subsisting from a preceding one. The Material is the garment of the Spiritual. The Soul is a Spiritual Substance, an organised human being. The body derives all its life, form, sensibility, from the soul, and loses these when the soul departs.

Swedenborg's works did not excite so much attention in England as he might have expected, but he made several valuable friendships. One of his disciples was Dr. Hampè, Preceptor to George II., and another was Dr. Messiter, of Broomhouse, Fulham, who assisted in the distribution of Swedenborg's works amongst people of distinction. In a letter, with some works to a friend in Edinburgh,

Dr. Messiter, after commenting upon Swedenborg's extraordinary attainments, says: "he is so totally insensible of his own merit that I am confident he does not know that he has any, and as himself somewhere says of the angels, he always turns his head away on the slightest encomium." Another convert was the Rev. Thomas Hartley, an eminently pious and devout man of catholic views who translated several of Swedenborg's works into English, and proved himself a steady friend. Dr. Hartley has left records of the intimacy which are valuable, and we give a few sentences bearing upon points in Swedenborg's character not before referred to.

"He is so far from the ambition of heading a sect that wherever he resides on his travels he is a mere solitary. . . . He has nothing of the precisian in his manner, nothing of melancholy in his temper, and *nothing in the least bordering on the enthusiast in his conversation and writings.*" And in reply to Hartley's offer of pecuniary assistance, he says: "As to this world's wealth I have what is sufficient, and more I neither seek nor wish for." Again, in reference to the possibility of persecution, Swedenborg responds: "I live on terms of familiarity and friendship with all the bishops of my country, who are ten in

number; as also with the sixteen senators and the rest of the nobility; for they know that I am in fellowship with angels. The king and queen also, and the three princes, their sons, show me much favour: I was once invited by the king and queen to dine at their table—an honour which is in general granted only to the nobility of the highest rank; and likewise, since, with the hereditary prince. They all wish for my return home: so far am I from being in danger of persecution in my own country, as you seem to apprehend, and so kindly wish to provide against, and should anything of the kind befall me elsewhere, it cannot hurt me." But while Swedenborg was penning this cheerful letter, trouble and persecution were brewing for him and his friends at home which obliged him to leave London for Sweden in September 1769.

The effect of Swedenborg's persistent circulation of his works amongst the nobility and clergy of Sweden began now to be manifest in the adhesion of an increasing number of distinguished Swedes to his views,—Royalty itself even openly honouring him. This sort of thing did not please some of the Swedish ecclesiastics, and a conspiracy, headed by Bishop Filenius (a nephew of Swedenborg's, and President of the House of

Clergy) and one Dean Ekebom, of Gottenburg, was started to crush the heresy in the bud. Several copies of the work *De Amore Conjugiali*, which Swedenborg had sent before him to Sweden, intending to distribute on his arrival, were seized as "contrary to the teaching of the Lutheran Church." Swedenborg protested; the work was not theological at all, and the clergy had no business with its revision. Bishop Filenius, who had ordered the seizure, hypocritically promised his assistance to get the books returned, and did nothing.

When Swedenborg discovered Filenius was deceiving him, he reproached him strongly, likened him to Judas Iscariot, and said that "he who spoke lies, lied also in his life." The conspirators tried another plan. Swedenborg and his friends Drs. Beyer and Rosén were members of the Diet, and it was arranged that the Seer should be publicly questioned in the Diet, as to the proofs of his mission, when he would, with his wonted ardour and simplicity, recount his experiences, and they would then be able to declare him the subject of delusions, and have him consigned to a lunatic asylum. Count Höpken heard of the plot, and wrote to Swedenborg, advising him to fly the country. Swedenborg was deeply grieved at this news, and going into his garden, he fell upon his

knees and prayed the Lord to direct him what to do. "A response was immediately received from an angel that 'he might rest securely upon his arm for the night,' *whereby*," says Swedenborg, "is meant that night in which the world is sunk in matters pertaining to the Church." Thus comforted Swedenborg remained quiet, and in the result the plot seems to have been dropped, and he suffered no harm. Another serious annoyance was the prosecution of his friends, Drs. Beyer and Rosén, by Dean Ekebom for heresy. Swedenborg heard of this while at Amsterdam, and wrote from thence remonstrating with the Consistory of Gottenburg. It happened that Ekebom had stated, in his deposition, that he did not, and would not know anything of Swedenborg's doctrine, nor had he even *seen* his works. This was a capital handle for Swedenborg, and he made good use of it against his adversary. To an accusation of Socinianism he vigorously retorts "it is a horrid blasphemy and untruth. Socinianism signifies the negation of the Divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ, when nevertheless His Divinity is the chief doctrine of the New Church." He defends his doctrine by citations from Scripture from the *Formula Concordiæ*, and the authority of the Fathers. Ekebom's accusations, sup-

ported in the Diet by clerical deputies from Gottenburg, were only too willingly listened to by Bishop Filenius, who appointed a committee of investigation into Swedenborgianism. The report of this committee was, however, strongly in favour of Swedenborg, and matters began to look bad for his adversaries.

They now gained permission to appeal to the King, in Council, and in the result the Gottenburg Consistory were ordered to render an account of the troublesome heresy. Dr. Beyer replied to the charges against him in a manful and spirited "Declaration respecting the writings of Swedenborg," wherein he bases his defence upon an article of the Swedish church, according to which, Holy Writ alone was to be taken as a guide in judging doctrines. Under such a proviso Swedenborg's doctrines were safe from attack, and hence Dr. Beyer was able to triumphantly declare that "so far as I have been able to study, I have found in them nothing but what closely coincides with the words of the Lord Himself, and that they shine with a light truly Divine." The Ekebom persecutions troubled Swedenborg but little; he had received promise of Divine support, and could now prosecute his labours undisturbed by the clamour raised against his works. In fact

he wrote to Dr. Beyer to this effect : " Clamour does no harm, being like the ferment in new wine which precedes its purification, for, unless what is wrong be winnowed and rejected, the right cannot be discerned or received." Hence he " did not stir one step to defend his cause, knowing that the Lord Himself, our Saviour, defends His church." But, when he found, after many months, that the Consistory came to no decision, and hostile rumours of all descriptions were being promulgated, he appealed direct to the King. In his letter (May, 1770) he complains that he has been attacked and not allowed to defend himself; he calmly re-asserts his divine mission, and shrewdly argues that he cannot do for his persecutors what God had done for him, " and convince them by their own eyes and ears . . . I cannot enable them to converse with angels and spirits, nor can I work miracles to dispose or force their understandings into the comprehension of what I say," but " when my writings are read with attention and cool reflection " they would prove he could not have " acquired such knowledge, save by open acquaintance with the spiritual world." In the July following he wrote to the Universities of Upsal, Lund, and Abo, urging them not to be swayed by any hostile decision the



Gottenburg Consistory might come to. But the persecution ended in smoke, the Consistory dropped it and came to no decision. Shortly before leaving Stockholm for the last time, (July, 1770), Swedenborg had an interview with the King who said "The Consistory has been silent on my letters and your works," and placing his hand upon Swedenborg's shoulder, continued "We may conclude that they have found nothing reprehensible in your books, and that you have written in conformity with the truth." His adversaries, however, succeeded in prohibiting the further importation of his books, against which Swedenborg intended to appeal, but it is not known whether he did so.

Swedenborg next addressed the Royal Academy of Sciences, of Stockholm, and sent a paper on the subject of "the Horse as the Correspondence of the human understanding," concluding with a statement that the Egyptian Hieroglyphics were interpretable by means of the science of correspondences. The Egyptians, more than any people in Asia, he says, cultivated this science, but in process of time they lost it in Idolatry—forgetting the substance in the symbol. The lost science had now been again revealed to the world through him (Swedenborg), that the Divinity of the Word might be manifested, and he

offers to explain to the Academy, the meaning of the Hieroglyphs if they wished it. In what way the academy treated the subject is not known, which is unfortunate. If the Seer was correct in his views of this new science it would prove a valuable acquisition to Professor Max Müller, Mr. George Smith, and their co-investigators of ancient hieroglyphics !

Towards the end of the summer of 1770, Swedenborg left Stockholm for Amsterdam, to publish "The whole Theology of the New Church, the foundation whereof will be the worship of our Lord the Saviour." On leaving he placed in the hands of M. Robsahm a judicial protest against examination of his works in his absence. In reply to Robsahm's inquiry if they would meet again, he said, "I do not know whether I shall return, but of this you may be certain, for the Lord has assured me—I shall not die until the book I have just finished is printed. Should we not see each other again in this world we shall meet in the presence of our Heavenly Father if we do his commandments. He then took his leave as cheerfully as if he had been a man of thirty," and left his native land *for ever*. The ship was detained by contrary winds, off Elsinore, and here General Tuxen, Commissioner of War for Denmark, obtained an introduction to

Swedenborg, and paid him a visit in the ship. General Tuxen was ushered into the Seer's presence without notice, and he says, "I found the Assessor seated in undress, his elbows on the table, his hands supporting his face, which was turned towards the door, his eyes open and much elevated. I was imprudent enough to address him at once, expressing my happiness at meeting him, whereon he started, (for he had been in a trance or extasy as his posture evinced), rose with some confusion, advanced a few steps from the table in a singular and visible uncertainty, as was plain from his countenance and hands. He soon recovered himself and welcomed me," and, after the usual congratulations, he "dressed himself as deftly as a young man of one-and-twenty," and accompanied General Tuxen to his house where he spent a social and musical evening with the General's wife and family. Tuxen asked him if there were any in Sweden who approved his theology, and he named a few bishops and some of the senators, and among the latter the famous Statesman, Count Hopken, of whom he spoke favourably. When asked how many in this world favoured his doctrines, Swedenborg replied, "Not many as yet. The number may be 50 or thereabout, and in proportion the same number in the

world of spirits." Tuxen inquired how a man might know whether he was on the road to salvation. "It is very easy," said Swedenborg, "He need only try himself by the Ten Commandments—Does he love and fear God? Is he happy at the welfare of others? Does he envy them? If excited by injury to anger or revenge, does he subdue his resentment because God has said that vengeance is His? and so on. If to such questions he can answer yea, he may rest assured he is on the road to heaven; but, if nay, he is on the road to hell."

According to Mr. White, General Tuxen found Swedenborg's works an antidote to scepticism and the fascinations of Voltaire. His first impressions were the reverse of favourable; herein, however, he shares in an experience which we believe is common to most readers of Swedenborg. Tuxen writes: "I confess when I first began to read his works, and cast my eye on the passage, '*a horse signifies the understanding of the Word,*' I was repulsed. Afterwards I read them attentively in series from the beginning, and though I found many things in them which surpassed my comprehension, yet I remembered the answer of Socrates, when his opinion was sought concerning the writings of Heraclitus,—'*I do not understand them every-*

*where, but what I do understand is so excellent that I do not doubt that what I do not understand is equally good.*' This encouraged me to read more and more; by what I read I profited, and I came to the conviction that no system of divinity is more worthy of God and consolatory to man, and so I will believe until convinced that any part thereof is either contrary to Scripture or to sound reason." It were well if General Tuxen had a few imitators in these days of hasty criticism; many an author's fame has suffered at the hands of those who stop at "first impressions."

Cuno is again our informant upon Swedenborg's doings in Amsterdam, where, in January, 1771, he was busy supervising the publication of his new book. Cuno says: "I could not conceal my astonishment that he should subscribe himself on the title-page, 'Servant of the Lord Jesus Christ.'" Swedenborg replied, "I have asked, and have not only received permission, but have been ordered to do so." Cuno continues: "It is surprising with what confidence the old gentleman speaks of the spiritual world, the angels, and of God Himself. . . . I know not what to make of him; he is a problem I cannot solve;" and then, half rebukingly, he adds: "I sincerely wish that upright men whom God has placed as watchmen upon

the walls of Zion had some time ago occupied themselves with this man." But perhaps Swedenborg was as much a source of perplexity to the watchmen of Zion as he was to Cuno!

It was about Midsummer, 1771, that Swedenborg brought out his last work—*"The True Christian Religion, containing the Universal Theology of the New Church, foretold by the Lord in Daniel, ch. vii., v. 13, 14, and in the Apocalypse, ch. xxi., v. 1, 2. By Emanuel Swedenborg, Servant of the Lord Jesus Christ."* As published by the Swedenborg Society, it is a volume of 915 pp. 8vo. The heads of doctrine discussed (each in an exhaustive and systematic style) are—(1) The Divine Being as the Creator, (2) The Redeemer, and (3) The Holy Spirit, (4) The Sacred Scriptures, (5) The Decalogue, (6) Faith, (7) Charity, (8) Free Determination, (9) Repentance, (10) Reformation and Regeneration, (11) Imputation, (12) Baptism, (13) The Holy Supper, and (14) The Consummation of the Age, the Second Coming of the Lord, the New Heaven, and the New Church. Then there are supplemental portions, describing the condition of Luther, Melancthon, and Calvin, also of the Dutch, English, Germans, Papists, Romish saints, Mahomedans, Africans and Jews in the spi-

ritual world ; also seventy-six "*Memorable relations* of things heard and seen" in that world (all of which are given to prove or illustrate doctrines previously enunciated); Analytical Indices of the whole contents of the work, and a List (occupying fifteen closely-printed pages) of the passages cited from the Scriptures. *The True Christian Religion* contains, in an easy and appreciable form, the sum and substance of Swedenborg's several theological and philosophical works : moreover, it is polemical (which many of those works are not); and occasionally his criticisms of some "forms of faith," or of the lives of professing Christians, are scathing. The work is relieved of much of its dryness by an almost superabundance of analogies, illustrations, and comparisons, and is altogether an unique and soundly logical code of theology, perfectly astonishing in its simplicity, its comprehensiveness, its almost mathematical completeness. "It forms," says an able writer, "a noble monument of the industry of the old man, now eighty-three years of age ; the crowning work of a long and laborious life, the productions of which as to mass alone may well fill us with amazement." Such a work as this *True Christian Religion* furnishes material for hundreds of sermons and books ; and since the Swedenborg

Society, aided by a donation from the late Mr. Attwood, has recently dispensed nearly 5,000 copies to preachers and teachers of religion (*gratis*), we may now expect to find Swedenborg's ideas cropping up in every direction. We cannot join in any cry of alarm at this, because, if false, Swedenborg's views will not bear the keen air of free controversy; and if true, they *must*, sooner, or later, find their level, for *Magna est veritas et prevalebit*.

Many of Swedenborg's contemporaries were delighted enough with his philosophy or doctrine, but sadly perplexed by the "Memorable Relations" interspersed between the chapters of his various works. Count Hopken took an opportunity of remonstrating in a friendly way with Swedenborg about mixing "his beautiful writings with so many memorabilia of which ignorance makes a jest and derision. He answered me that their insertion did not depend upon him; that he was too old to sport with spiritual things; that he was too concerned about his eternal happiness to give way to foolish notions, and assured me on his hope of salvation that he had truly seen and heard whatever he had described. It may be so: the Church cannot judge of mysteries, nor can I." But Paxton Hood, in his excellent *Biography of Swedenborg*, is enthusiastic in



his admiration of these memorable relations, which he judges to be as much essential portions of Swedenborg's revelations as the numerous visions and mysteries referred to in the Bible are integral portions of the Scriptures. Accordingly, he enters into a lengthy and eloquent examination of these memorabilia, and courageously facing a difficult position, declares his opinion that Swedenborg neither dreamed nor fancied, but actually witnessed the phenomena he describes.

One of Swedenborg's admirers, no less a personage than the Landgrave of Hesse Darmstadt, wrote him a letter (July, 1771), enquiring *inter alia* whether the gift of seership was transferable, to which Swedenborg replies in the negative, and says: "The Lord Himself must open the spiritual sight. A spirit is sometimes permitted to enter a man and communicate to him some truth, but it is not granted to the man to speak mouth to mouth with the spirit. It is even *very dangerous*, for the spirit enters (and establishes) the man's self-love which is at enmity with heavenly love." And in another letter to a Baron Hazel, of Rotterdam, he speaks still more strongly. "The Lord provides that spirits and men should seldom converse together. *Their open intercourse would be more dangerous than can be imagined.* Unless the Lord Himself

introduces a man to the spiritual world, and especially preserves and protects him (as he has done in my case), *he may endanger his soul and imperil his life.* The Lord Himself guards me from the many and malicious devices and temptations of spirits. I therefore dissuade you from all desire to possess this intercourse." In the face of statements like these, which are frequently met with in Swedenborg's works, it is a matter of wonder that the "Apostle of the New Jerusalem" is often catalogued with the modern Spiritualists. Swedenborg sent two copies of the *True Christian Religion* to the Landgrave of Hesse Darmstadt in July 1771, requesting him to submit it to the ecclesiastics of his Duchy, but "choose those" says he, "who love the truth, and who love it because it is the truth" (amongst such Swedenborg looked always for a just appreciation), but he continues, "Others will see in the work no light, but merely darkness." *The True Christian Religion* having been safely launched, Swedenborg's mission was fulfilled; yet, as if determined to pass away in literary harness, he again takes up his pen, and composes a *Coronis* or appendix to that work, elucidating some interesting points, and "*An Invitation to the New Church*, wherein he states that "the New Church is established not by

miracles, but by the revelation of the spiritual sense of the Word, and by my introduction to the spiritual world ;" declares that the Holy Spirit is not an arbitrary gift, but "is the Lord Himself, who is perpetually present with every man, whether good or evil, and that without His presence no one could live. . . . The origin of all the errors of the Church has been that *men live of themselves.*" Both these treatises were published posthumously.

Swedenborg now leaves Amsterdam for the last time, and arrives in London at the beginning of August, 1771. He at once repaired to his former lodgings, 26, Cold-bath-fields, the house of Mr. Shearsmith, wig and peruke maker, and took up his abode there as described at the commencement of our sketch. Here he remained quietly and peacefully awaiting his summons to "that bourne from whence no traveller returns." His presence, Mrs. Shearsmith testifies, "was a blessing to the house; whilst he was with us we had harmony and good business." If these worthy people liked their lodger, he also respected and trusted them, so much so that he used to send Shearsmith to his drawer for money to pay himself his bills. Amongst the visitors of Swedenborg in these last days was the Swedish chaplain,

the Rev. Arved Ferelius, who has left interesting details of his visits, some of which we extract. Swedenborg went sometimes to the Swedish church, but he told Ferelius that "he had no peace there on account of spirits who contradicted what the preacher said, especially when he spoke of three persons in the Godhead. Many may suppose," continues Ferelius, "that assessor Swedenborg was a very singular and eccentric person; this was by no means the case. On the contrary, he was very agreeable and complaisant in company; he entered into conversation upon every subject, and accommodated himself to the ideas of his acquaintance. He never spoke of his own writings and doctrines except when inquired concerning them, when he always spoke as freely as he had written. If, however, he observed that any one desired to ask impertinent questions or to ridicule him he immediately gave an answer which silenced the aggressor without making him any wiser." Another visitor, Mr. Burkhardt, Clerk to the Swedish Chapel, says "Swedenborg, is a good and holy man, much given to abstraction of mind; even when walking he sometimes seemed absorbed in prayer. Latterly he took but little notice of things and people in the streets." But the Rev. F. Okley (Moravian), who paid Swedenborg

a visit, was not so favourably impressed. Writing to Wesley (Dec. 1772) he treats our subject somewhat superciliously. "Baron Swedenborg is to me a riddle. . . . He told me I could not understand his *Vera Christiana Religio* without a divine illumination, and I am obliged to confess that I have not yet a sufficiency of it for that purpose."

On Christmas Eve (1771) Swedenborg had an apoplectic seizure which deprived him of speech for a time and lamed one side. He lay for three or four weeks taking no nourishment but a little tea without milk, and cold water, and once some currant jelly. After that time he recovered and ate and drank as usual. Considering his herculean literary labours—all performed with his own hand, it is astonishing that some such prostration did not earlier befall him. His friends Hartley and Messiter visiting him about this time put it to him to declare whether all he had written was strictly true or whether any portions were to be excepted. Swedenborg replied warmly: "I have written nothing but the truth, as you will have more and more confirmed to you all the days of your life, provided you keep close to the Lord and faithfully serve Him alone, by shunning evils of all kinds as sins against Him, and diligently searching His word, which from

beginning to end bears incontestible witness to the truth of the doctrines I have delivered to the world."

John Wesley had a copy of the *True Christian Religion* sent to him by Swedenborg, and, whether he read it or not, he formed a strong desire to see and converse with its author, *but this wish he kept to himself*. One day, towards the end of February, 1772, he was engaged with his preachers arranging circuits, when the following note was handed to him: "SIR,—*I have been informed in the world of spirits that you have a strong desire to converse with me. I shall be happy to see you if you will favour me with a visit.*—EMANUEL SWEDENBORG." Wesley perused the note in great astonishment; after a pause he read it aloud, at the same time confessing his secret desire to see Swedenborg. He wrote, in reply, saying he was preparing for a six months' preaching tour, and would wait upon him on his return, but Swedenborg answered that the proposed visit would be too late, as he (Swedenborg) would "go into the world of spirits on the 29th of March, never more to return." But Wesley, who was nothing if not methodical, would not vary his plans, and the two great men never met—at least not on *terra firma*. One of Wesley's disciples, the Rev. Samuel Smith, who was

present when the letter was read, and supplies the anecdote, was sufficiently curious to investigate his writings, and, in the result, became an open advocate of them.

Two or three weeks before Swedenborg's decease (says Springer) he was temporarily deprived of spiritual sight, and no trial he had endured distressed him so keenly: he repeatedly cried out, "Oh, my God! hast Thou then forsaken Thy servant at last?" In a few days his precious gift returned, and he was happy. Springer inquired when the New Jerusalem would be established, and Swedenborg replied, "No mortal can declare the time: no, not even the celestial angels; it is known to the Lord alone." Another old friend, Bergstrom, the inn-keeper, also paid him a visit. It was suggested that, as Swedenborg's end was approaching, he should take the Holy Supper, and to this he consented. Ferelius was sent for, and took the opportunity of seriously exhorting Swedenborg "to publish the truth to the world, and recant either the whole or a part of what he had advanced, since he had now nothing to expect from the world, which he was so soon about to leave for ever," whereupon Swedenborg raised himself half upright in bed, and, placing his sound hand (the other was palsied) upon

his breast, exclaimed, with great zeal and emphasis, "As true as you see me before you, so true is everything I have written. I could have said more had I been permitted. When you come into eternity you will see all things as I have stated and described them, and we shall have much to say concerning them to each other." Then, "with deep and affecting devotion, with folded hands, and with head uncovered, he confessed his own unworthiness, and received the Holy Supper." Afterwards he presented Ferelius with the *Arcana Cælestia*, of which only nine copies remained unsold.

Sunday, the 29th of March, 1772, the day on which Swedenborg had prophesied he would "go into the spiritual world, never more to return," came at last. Mrs. Shearsmith and the servant-maid were sitting at his bedside in the afternoon, probably wondering within themselves if the prophecy would be fulfilled, for he had a month previously communicated to them the date of his departure, so cheerily, that the servant makes the comparison—"He was as pleased as I should have been if I was going to have a holiday or going to some merry-making." He retained perfect possession of his faculties to the last. Hearing the clock strike, he inquired the time, and



upon being answered "Five o'clock," he said, "*It is well: I thank you. God bless you.*" A few moments later he had yielded himself into the hands of his Maker.

The arrangements for Swedenborg's funeral were made by one Mr. Lindegren, a city merchant, and the undertaker was Mr. Robinson, of Ratcliff Highway. In accordance with a custom of the time, the body was laid in State at the undertaker's for several days. The funeral took place on the 5th of April, with all the ceremonies of the Lutheran religion, and the Rev. A. Ferelius officiated. The body was interred in a vault of the Swedish church in Prince's-square, near the Tower of London. In 1857 two memorial tablets in marble, bearing inscriptions in English and Swedish were erected "by one of his English admirers" in the south wall of the church, and still remain. Mr. White states that the remains were three times molested by curious and superstitious visitors, who took away relics. The House of Clergy in Sweden requested Ferelius to render an account of his knowledge of Swedenborg, which he did, but the document is missing. On the 7th October, 1772, Chevalier M. Sandel delivered, on behalf of the Royal Academy of Sciences, Stockholm, a remarkable eulogium of Swedenborg in the Hall of the Swedish House of Nobles, and several

years after a medal was struck in his honour. Eleven years after his death five admirers of his writings met together (5th December, 1783) at the "Queen's Arms Tavern," now St. Paul's Hotel, St. Paul's Churchyard, and out of this meeting afterwards sprang the New Jerusalem Church.

\*     \*     \*     \*

Swedenborg was one of four things. Either he was an impostor, Or he was a fanatic, enthusiast, or madman, whose eccentric, diseased, or superabundant imagination, gave birth to the works he has produced, Or he was a mere spirit medium—a clairvoyant, whose utterances were either wholly or principally self-derived— a climber over the walls of separation wisely placed by providence between terrestrial and celestial lands. Or he was a true Seer and teacher, raised up for specific divine purposes, and plenished from first to last with the zeal and wisdom required for his office.

There is a singular deficiency of the element of imposture in him. An imposition is invariably based upon some desire of gain or power, or reputation. None of such dirt bespatters Swedenborg's robes. When he heard, or thought he heard, a call from on high, like a true disciple, he left all and followed his Master-

The office he held, the scientific reputation he had earned, the wealth his discoveries and works were reaping and to reap for him, the European—nay, cosmopolitan—fame before him, were all resigned for the pursuit of truth in spheres where the world could neither follow nor sympathise with him. Our Spiritual Columbus had heard of a new world, and he must needs voyage to discover and explore it. He flung himself heart and soul into his new pursuit, albeit the task was so gigantic. He lived humbly, frugally—his diet was of the plainest; he published work after work at his own cost, and gave any profit for the spread of the Gospel. For years his books went forth anonymously, on their merits. Unostentatious to a degree, he never sought followers, and though he made friends wherever he went, they never stood between him and his work. He was satisfied to deliver his Master's message, and sought neither to anticipate results nor hasten them by proselytising. Of him it cannot be said that :

" Born for the Universe, he narrowed his mind,  
And gave up to party what was meant for mankind."

Although conservative in some respects, he is a leader of free thought and a free press; he was no ascetic, he loved children, and he was not a recluse—he

enjoyed society. Nor was he self-assertive or controversial; he meddled with no disputes, stated his views patiently, and referred cavillers to his books and their Bibles. He practised as well as preached the hard doctrine that heaven's felicities are attainable only by persistent resistance of evil as sin against God, and a life in conformity with the Decalogue. His life and his works are coherent, consistent, innocent. He was never a sceptic of God's existence or goodness; trusting in Him like a child he believed in himself and his mission, but lived for mankind. It is easier to presume he was mistaken than that he has wilfully deceived.

It is not an easy thing to find traces of insanity, fanaticism, or even heated enthusiasm in him. In early life his mind was carefully and severely cultured, and he developed a vigorous and acute intellect, and a capacity for the most profound and sustained thought. All this Titanic mental power is equally visible in his spiritual works; from the first down to the last there is no sign of moral, mental, or physical feebleness and decay. The transition period of 1743-5 may have altered his perceptions, but it did not, apparently, diminish his intellectual power. His immediate ancestors exhibit no tendency to madness. His father had many

enemies, but none seem to have discovered any flaw in him other than too much zeal against *their* corruptions. The testimony of his contemporaries show Swedenborg as always free even from eccentricities. Apart from his diaries (an explanation of which his own philosophy supplies), the evidence of temporary insanity is based upon malicious gossip, which does not bear dissection. His fondness for coffee—stretch as you may the effects of that beverage—does not explain matters. As Dr. Wilkinson wittily observes, you “cannot pour the *Arcana* or *Diarium* out of a coffee-pot!” And so far from being nervous and weak in mind or body he was endowed with a hardy constitution, which was never impaired by excesses, or by the anxieties of daily toil, deficient resources, sickness, hypochondria, and other worries that drive ordinary mortals crazy. On the contrary, he had a calm, placid disposition, led an active, laborious, cheerful life, travelling continually; composed all his works and conducted his literary business unaided; enjoyed the friendship of his King and fellow-statesmen; discussed politics in the Senate; memorialised his government upon financial and other weighty matters, and maintained the dignity of a high position in public and private life. And an organised and powerful con-

spiracy in his own country utterly failed to convince his fellows that he was either mad, unreasonable, excessively heretical, or anti-scriptural. His conversation and dress revealed no hallucinations. His speech was never the excited ravings of a zealot: it was calm, deliberate, and impressive. The style of his composition has been truly described as "dry, hard, logical, and as full of repetition as the solution of a mathematical problem. He splits up every proposition into a certain number of subordinate topics, and slowly works his way through them all, piling up proof and illustration as he goes along. The most glorious angel or the most terrible fiend never disturbs the serene equanimity of his style. He remains a cool observer, a strict analyst, a scrupulously accurate recorder, whether in heaven or hell, or in the world of spirits." We have never read works so free from enthusiasm or the play of the imagination and so barren of literary and poetic adornment. They are indeed rough hewn, and need some "dressing" to become popular. All his teachings, however, converge into two—the Supreme Divinity of the Lord Jesus Christ and Love to the neighbour. High as Swedenborg soars, he never loses himself; his philosophy is based upon natural phenomena, his doctrines are

constructed out of the "letter" of the Scriptures. His key to Scriptural Interpretation is an ancient science revived. It cannot be said to be either arbitrary or fanciful, since Swedenborg uses in his last works the same equivalents to explain similar terms appearing in his earliest volumes, although between them there is an interval of twenty-three years. The Science of Correspondences does not only unfold revealed mysteries, but the relations of end, cause and effect, substance, form, and use. It discovers the Source of Life, discloses its innumerable envelopments and manifestations, both in Nature and the Bible, and marries Science to Religion. Surely the key that unlocks all the secrets of the universe must be the Master's! Swedenborg only gives the first principles of this science; the man has yet to come who will formulate it and give it a position amongst the sciences.

Swedenborg's relations of things heard and seen in the spiritual world have earned for him the term mystic and Spiritualist. Because he speaks of a land we have not seen and cannot see, shall we call him names and shut our ears? Such a position may suit those who fancy that nothing more can be known than is known of the other life, and are satisfied with such ignorance. But the exposition of a mystery

is its death, and most of us look forward to a time when this mother of abomination and superstition shall cease to exist. In bringing down to our comprehension the nearness of heaven to earth and the *reality* of the future life Swedenborg has done well. As to his Memorabilia generally, they abound with the most extraordinary statements—it would be wonderful were it not so. But it appears that every statement, whether made in his earliest or his latest work, is perfectly comprehensible according to the fundamental principles he himself lays down. There is throughout nothing flighty, confused, contradictory, or erratic in the relation, and though we may not see the explanation we cannot but feel the author is master of the situation. It is this wonderful consistency of purpose in Swedenborg that seems to us to belie the accusation that he was a mere spirit-medium. He it was, we remember, who predicted some eighty years before the occurrence, the rise of Spiritism—consequent upon an inroad of vagrant spirits into the earth plane of the spirit-world, and he frequently warns his readers against it and them. Modern Spiritism is degraded in the bad company it keeps, in its feeble morality and uncertain doctrine, and in its anti-scriptural tendencies. If the Church fails to satisfy man's cravings



to know more of the life beyond the tomb, Spiritism brings no help, for the *dicta* of one spirit are contradicted by the next, and nerves and brains are worn into hypochondriacal attenuation in the endeavour to fashion any coherent system of ethics out of spirit-messages.

Whether, however, Swedenborg be or be not a true Seer, the Apostle of a New Spiritual Christianity, the herald of the Re-generation, as Luther was of the Re-formation of the Church : all this is matter for individual judgment, and the purpose of this sketch is answered in supplying the materials for such a judgment, or at least indicating where they may be found. For his admirable qualities and worthy life we have learned to respect Swedenborg. The list of those who have appreciated his genius daily grows more numerous. In a work recently published, entitled *Letters and Social Aims*, Ralph Waldo Emerson makes the following remarks :—“The most remarkable step in the religious history of recent ages is that made by the genius of Swedenborg, who described the moral faculties and affections of man with the hard realism of an astronomer describing the suns and planets of our system. . . . Swedenborg had a vast genius, and announced many things true and admirable, though always clothed in somewhat sad and Stygian colours [?].

These truths, passing out of his system into general circulation, are now met with every day, qualifying the views and creeds of all churches and of men of no church." There is no doubt that Swedenborg has outlived neglect, contempt, and ridicule which would have extinguished a lesser light. It is possible, if the signs of the times mean anything, that some day men will wonder how they have lived so long in the shadow of such a genius and not known him, and will hurry to set up a pedestal for him amongst the tombs of the departed great. But that would be no honour to such a man. His books are his best monument, and it would seem that the Swedenborg Society are erecting this with the perseverance that begets success. And Swedenborg himself would say, "Since man is a recipient of love and wisdom, which are his life, from the Lord, it follows that all that man does from thence is from the Lord, to whom alone the praise is due." Not Paul; not *Swedenborg*, but CHRIST!

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