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A table of contents for *Bibliotheca Sacra* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_bib-sacra_01.php

ARTICLE V.

WHAT IS SWEDENBORGIANISM ?

BY REV. JAMES REED, BOSTON, MASS.

THE term "Swedenborgianism," though commonly applied to the belief of those who accept as true the doctrinal system contained in the theological writings of Swedenborg, is not regarded by them as a name which correctly defines their position. Swedenborg himself lays claim to no personal leadership. The truth which he was instrumental in revealing is to him, as much as to any one, the object of reverent wonder. He deduces it, in all its essential points, from the Sacred Scriptures; and he avers that the reception of it among men will have the effect not of adding a new sect to the many already existing in Christendom, but of reforming and renovating Christianity itself. The future to which he looks forward is a time when a new Christian church will take the place of that which was established at the Lord's advent. Nor is there any vagueness or uncertainty in his expectations. He associates them with the definite fulfilment of Scripture prophecies. He declares that the second coming of the Lord is already accomplished; that a new aeon or dispensation of divine truth and influence has even now begun; and that we are living in the period foreshadowed by the holy city, New Jerusalem, which John saw descending from God out of heaven.

The doctrines taught in Swedenborg's writings are radically different from all others, and cover every conceivable point of religious belief. He invariably calls them the doctrines of the New Church signified by the New Jerusalem. The idea of personal proprietorship in them is wholly alien from his thought. Out of Holy Scripture, when he was diligently reading it, they came to him, as the Lord's own truth

revealed for all men. Those also who under his guidance have been led to accept the same doctrines regard them in like manner. The man Swedenborg passes out of view; and they use the term "New Church" as the only designating title which is at all adequate to the greatness and importance of the thing expressed. Still, it is but natural that others should by name associate them with the distinguished author whose writings are the chief enunciation of their principles, and the proximate cause of their organic existence. With these preliminary explanations, I will endeavor to answer, as concisely as possible, the question assigned me.

THE INTERNAL OR SPIRITUAL SENSE OF SCRIPTURE.

I have said that the Scriptures are the fountain-head of New-Church doctrines. But, viewed in the light of those doctrines, the Scriptures themselves are seen to possess a depth and fulness of meaning unknown before. Since they are the word of God — the very utterance and expression of divine truth, — their whole significance does not appear in the sense of the letter. For their meaning is infinite, even as the Lord God himself is infinite. Within the literal sense are higher senses. Divine truth, in its descent to men, must needs accommodate itself to their various degrees of intelligence. To those who are in heaven it must put on a different form, and bear a different aspect, than to those who live on earth. The literal sense is its earthly sense — its lowest and outmost form of expression. The higher senses within that of the letter are its heavenly senses, adapted to the different grades of angelic wisdom. These various senses, distinct though they are from each other, are yet united. Together they form one perfect and consistent revelation of truth.

THE DOCTRINE OF CORRESPONDENCES.

The relation between the external and the internal, the literal and the spiritual senses of Scripture is that of correspondence. This term is used by Swedenborg to designate

the relationship universally existing between natural and spiritual things. According to the doctrine involved in it, man is a microcosm, or universe in miniature. All objects in his world of nature are the embodied forms of things existing in the mental world within him. Everywhere around himself he beholds himself. Whatever his eyes may rest upon answers, or, in other words, corresponds, to some thought or affection of his mind or heart. Useful and innocent animals, for instance, embody to his outer sense his own pure and gentle feelings; while in fierce and venomous beasts he has a living picture of evil appetites and passions to which perchance he is no stranger. To this subject I shall have occasion to refer again farther on. Suffice it now to say that, according to New-Church teaching, the Scriptures are written by correspondences. All the words and expressions of the literal sense shadow forth what is spiritual. Within the natural types and images a deeper meaning lies concealed.

SWEDENBORG'S MISSION.

By far the largest part of Swedenborg's theological writings is devoted to the exposition of the spiritual sense of Scripture. This was the special work to which he felt that he had been called. He was a man of many and great attainments. Until he had passed middle life his attention was chiefly directed to scientific and philosophical studies and pursuits. Nor did he neglect the public duties which fell to him as a member of the upper house of the Swedish Diet. In all these varied occupations he distinguished himself. His position as Assessor of the Board of Mines made him prominent in the field of practical knowledge; while his voluminous and valuable writings on scientific subjects gave him a wide reputation, unsurpassed by any of his contemporaries. But he had reached the age of fifty-seven years before he became a writer on spiritual themes. Then he began the preparation of his great work, the *Arcana Coelestia*, which consists of a detailed exposition of the internal

sense of Genesis and Exodus. It was published in eight quarto volumes, which appeared at intervals during a period of nine years. Interspersed with these volumes, or following them, were no less than fifteen other publications of a religious character. All of them combined would not, however, exceed in the amount of printed matter two thirds of the Arcana ; and the largest among them, viz. the *Apocalypse Revealed*, is itself an explanation of the spiritual meaning of the Book of Revelation. So it will be seen that, contrary to the general opinion concerning Swedenborg, he is to be regarded, first and foremost, as an expounder of the Scriptures. He says, respecting himself : " I have not received anything which pertains to the doctrine of that church [i.e. the New Church] from any angel, but from the Lord alone, while I read the word."¹ And what he is thus enabled to reveal is no fresh gospel, but the truth which has been slumbering for generations and centuries in the New Testament and the Old. On this truth all his important doctrinal teachings are based. He himself is only the humble servant of the Lord Jesus Christ in laying bare before the eyes of men the hidden treasures of the Sacred Scriptures. This is his claim. A modest claim, indeed, so far as his own personality is concerned, but great beyond the power of man to estimate, if we consider the nature of that which is revealed.

THE NATURE AND ATTRIBUTES OF GOD.

In the Scriptures thus opened and illumined, our author discovers, first of all, the grand underlying principle of God's absolute unity. The primary doctrine of Christian theology is expressed in the declaration : " Hear, O Israel ; the Lord our God is one Lord." Whatever duality or triplicity may be predicated of the Divine Being in no wise militates against the idea of his perfect oneness. As each individual man is a unit, so is he in whose image, after whose likeness, man is made. Not only is he one, but he cannot by any possibility be thought of otherwise. The trinity in him must be such

¹ True Christian Religion, No. 779.

as is finitely imaged in a human being. It cannot, therefore, be a trinity of persons. Soul, body, and out-going energy is what may be discerned in every man. An inmost essential nature, an external form by which that nature is manifested or revealed, and a sphere or influence proceeding out of and beyond that form, are the three necessary constituents of all personality. Without each and all of them there could be no unity, because there could be no existence.

God alone is life. All other beings derive their life from him. This truth is implied in his memorial name "Jehovah," by which in the Old Testament he is most frequently designated. That name means the "I am," the *Esse*, he who is. Furthermore, the essence of life is love. The essence of the divine life is divine love. To say that God is love is to state the exact literal fact. As a man destitute of love, that is, of all feeling and desire, would be in reality no man at all, so is it, by parity of reasoning, with the infinite prototype of humanity. All intelligent action is, in the very nature of things, caused by love of some kind. The divine activities receive their impulse from the divine love. And this love is perfect in quality as well as infinite in extent. It is identical with goodness. God alone is good. He is goodness itself. His love is the utterly unselfish love of others. Here, then, we have the end or motive of creation. Man lives, and the universe for his sake has been called into being, because the Lord loved him, and wished for objects other than himself on whom he might bestow happiness. He not only loves men, but desires that they should love him in return, and to this effect teaches and directs them. The first of all the commandments is, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength." In other words, the end of human existence is accomplished, and the highest degree of human felicity is attained, when man is conjoined with his Maker in the bonds of reciprocal love.

But love is not the whole of the divine nature. God is infinitely wise as well as infinitely good. In order to be made

full and perfect, love must be supplemented by wisdom. Mere emotion or desire will accomplish nothing. Affection is idle and aimless unless it finds expression in thought. This principle is clearly illustrated by the nature and operations of the human mind. And whatever true knowledge we may have respecting man will help us to understand God. The finite things in him who is created in God's image must needs teach us concerning the infinite things which are in the original of that image. The mind of man consists of will and understanding. All its operations are comprised under the two general heads of loving and thinking. Man's will and understanding are limited and fallible. The Lord's will, on the contrary, is perfect love, and his understanding is perfect wisdom. Or, what is the same thing, he is goodness itself and truth itself. We do not say of him that he is good in the sense that a man is good, by virtue of shunning evil; but he is the absolute goodness, and evil is all that is opposed to him. Nor do we say that he is true or truthful as one who turns away from what is false; but he is the living fountain of truth, from which all truth is derived. There is no standard of right and wrong outside of him to which he is subject. He himself is the sole standard. Whatever he does is good from the very fact of his doing it. Evil of any kind or degree can no more be predicated of him than the noon-day sun can shoot out rays of midnight blackness and arctic cold.

Love and wisdom are not mere attributes of God: they are himself,—his very life. Nor should we think of them as mere abstractions. They are of all things the most real and living, the essential elements of the divine personality. They are the vital influences underlying and sustaining all existence. From infinite love, by and according to infinite wisdom, the universe was created. In the same manner it is continually preserved, for preservation is perpetual creation. No creature could live for an instant if the communication of life from the source of life were to cease. The same love and wisdom by which man was brought into being are equally active and constant in caring for him. Divine providence is

correctly defined as the operation or government of love and wisdom in the affairs of the universe. It extends from the greatest to the least events in human experience. It is literally true, as the Scriptures teach, that not a sparrow falls to the ground without our Father. All this wonderful providence looks beyond what is temporal to that which is spiritual and eternal. If natural privations or calamities occur they are permitted for the sake of eternal purposes. And the one great end which is always in view has been already mentioned, viz. the conjunction of man with his Maker, or, what is the same thing, the formation of a heaven of angels from the human race.

THE INCARNATION.

These principles lie at the foundation of the New-Church conception of the Supreme Being, and are believed to furnish the solution of many difficult problems. If love or goodness is the essence of the divine life, wisdom or truth is the form or mode of its existence. This is the doctrine of the *Logos*. The Word, which was in the beginning with God, and which was God, is simply what its name implies, — the utterance or expression of the inmost nature of the Infinite. There never was a time when the divine love was not in the act or effort of giving itself forth by means of wisdom. In his revelations to men God has never ceased to reveal himself in ways adapted to their states and condition. Unable to see or understand him as he is in himself, they could yet approximately see and understand him by means of his Word. One form which his Word has taken in accommodation to their finiteness is the Sacred Scriptures. Another was the manifestation made through Jesus Christ. As the crowning exhibition of God's love to his children "the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." What had previously found expression in human language was now embodied in a visible human shape. No second person in the Godhead appeared, but the outflowing life of the Father

clothed itself with the form of a man. The angel said to Mary, "The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee; therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God." And so it came to pass. The divine proceeding effluence called the Holy Spirit — which is the first cause of all finite existence — being communicated to the virgin, made her to be the mother of Jesus. A nature thus produced must needs be different from every other. Its relation to the Father must needs be of the most intimate kind. It furnished an earthly tabernacle for God to dwell in, such as was never before seen or known. Accordingly we find the Saviour saying, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father"; "I and the Father are one."

In other words, the birth of Jesus Christ was God's way of revealing himself to men in the world. In pursuance of his unchanging purpose of building up a heaven of angels from them, he came in the time of their great need to save them from their sins. The human nature which he assumed, so far as it was derived from the mother, was like all other human nature. It inherited tendencies to evil of every kind, and for this reason was subject to temptations from infernal spirits. In contending with these the Lord fought the battles of mankind. He overcame the enemies of men's souls at a period when those enemies were greatly in the ascendancy. His purpose was not merely to deliver men from the effects or consequences of sin, but to remove the sin itself and the influences which caused it. So he engaged in warfare with all that was evil in his own woman-born humanity, and thus accomplished a work of redemption for the whole human race. The adversaries said, "This is the heir: come, let us kill him, and the inheritance shall be ours." But in the pit which they digged they were themselves taken.

THE DIVINE HUMANITY.

As one effect of the Lord's work in overcoming evil a great change was brought about in his own human nature. The re-

sistance of temptation and the subjugation of hereditary tendencies could not but produce in it a complete transformation. While his earthly life continued there was often a feeling and appearance of separateness and even of antagonism between that which was of the Father and that which was of the mother in the humanity of our Lord. His external natural proclivities were similar to those of other men, while the internal springs of his being were those of infinite goodness. The states through which he passed were various. At some times he was fully conscious of his nearness to and oneness with the Father. At other times the Father seemed far off ; as when, for example, he cried on the cross, " My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me ? " He prayed to the Father as to another person, because his poor struggling human nature shared the common need of divine succor. But though tempted in all things like as we are, he was without sin. And in consequence of his complete victories over all evil his humanity became, as was said above, transformed, or, as the Scriptures say, " glorified." It was permeated and filled with the divine life of the Father, and thus became itself divine. Whatever was incompatible with the fulness of the divine presence was gradually put away from it ; the sense of separation from the Father ceased ; and the Lord Jesus could then truly say concerning himself, " All power is given unto me in heaven and on earth." This great doctrine of the divinity of his humanity presents him to us as the sole object of worship, as the one in whom, as Paul teaches, " dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily."

THE ATONEMENT.

From all that has preceded it will be evident that no place is afforded in New-Church theology for the doctrine of the atonement as commonly understood. Because God is absolutely and unequivocally one, because the Son of God, or the Word, is but the completer revelation and expression of God's own life, because the coming of Jesus Christ was God's own coming, there is no opportunity for a vicarious substitution.

Again, for the reason that God is love, and is actuated by love in all his dealings with men he does not require to have his anger appeased, or his sense of justice satisfied, or the majesty of his government vindicated, by any kind of punishment or suffering. Still further, the work which he accomplished by his assumption of human nature was not confined to the incident of his death, but extended throughout his whole life. The passion of the cross was but the last of the series of temptations whereby he conquered the hells, and made his humanity divine. In the highest and truest sense, as long as he lived on earth, he was "dying daily." He was doing as it is necessary for all men to do who would follow him in the regeneration. If the word "atonement" is understood to mean simply reconciliation, or the establishment of a better and more orderly relationship between God and mankind, and if it is further understood that man, not God, needed to be reconciled, then it may be truly said that there was an atonement. "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself." The erring sons of men were brought into a state in which they were more fully "at one" with their Divine Father.

THE TRINITY.

Reference was made in the previous remarks to the subject of the Trinity, and a comparison was suggested in this particular between God and man. As the totality of man's being consists of soul, body, and out-flowing life, so in God we discern an inmost essential divinity, a divine humanity, and a divine proceeding influence. And these three are comprehended, as was said, in the one person of the Lord Jesus Christ. They are what is meant by Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. We read in John's Gospel, "No one hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him." Again, we read that the Lord breathed on his disciples and said, "Receive ye the Holy Spirit." In the very nature of things this triplicity must exist in every person and object, yea, even in every speech and action. There must be the purpose from which,

the means by which, and the result to which, all effort is directed. End, cause, and effect are terms expressive of the same idea. The end is nothing without the cause, and both are embodied in the effect. Affection, thought, and act constitute the trine which is constantly apparent in all human operations. A man desires something: for example, a place of habitation. But desire does not produce it. In order that his desire may be carried out he must exercise his intelligence, or avail himself of that of other men, in forming a definite plan. But even then his purpose is not accomplished; nor will it be until the requisite materials are gathered together, and labor is expended on them sufficient to construct a house. Throughout nature we likewise behold the same trinal order of life. It is seen in the three great kingdoms, animal, vegetable, and mineral, which include all natural objects; in the heat, light and actinic force of the sun; in the three forms, solid, fluid, and gaseous, which characterize inorganic matter; and in countless other instances. In short, it exists everywhere in the creation, because it exists first of all in the Creator. Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are the grand archetype of all the lower forms of life derived from them. There has necessarily been a divine trinity in God from eternity, but it came down most fully and clearly to our natural apprehension when the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us. For this reason it is more perceptible in the record of the New Testament than in that of the Old.

RELIGION AND LIFE.

We come now to a consideration of man's duty and relationship to his Heavenly Father. Created, as he is, to the end that he may be conjoined with his Maker in the eternal bonds of reciprocal love, he is of necessity a free agent; for freedom is involved in the very idea of reciprocity. He is also endowed with rationality, that is, with the power of discriminating in favor of what is good and true, as opposed to what is evil and false. But the freedom to do good involves the freedom not to do it, or to do evil. There is no other origin

of evil than this : that men of their own accord have turned away from goodness. Yet the Lord has ever striven to keep them in the paths of righteousness. He has not failed to give them all needful instruction, or to guide them by the dispensations of his providence. The only thing which he could not do to save them from evil and its consequences was to take away their freedom ; for without freedom his divine plan would be wholly nullified, and they would be no longer men, but as the beasts that perish. So in all that he provides or permits he guards their freedom as the very apple of his eye.

His instructions to them, communicated by means of the revealed word, have so clearly indicated the distinction between right and wrong as to leave no room for doubt on that point. There never was a time when the world has been destitute of the principles of life contained in the ten commandments. And these have not been presented as mere abstractions, but as truth proceeding from the only source of truth. Hence to break them has been to sin against God, while keeping them has been the expression of regard for God's will. This is the great rule of life for the New Jerusalem : Shun evils, not as a mere matter of expediency, not as a means of escaping punishment or other unpleasant consequences, but because they are sins against him who is goodness itself. Let not your warfare be a pretended one against universal wickedness, but look into your own heart, and shun the particular evils to which you are inclined. Shun them in affection and thought as well as in outward action. Then will your religion bear a definite relation to your daily life ; for the latter will always be viewed in the light of the divine countenance.

Nor in endeavoring to do this work will there be occasion for any of us to claim merit for ourselves. The Lord alone is good, wise, and powerful. Whatever goodness, wisdom, or power we may possess, is not our own, but the Lord's in us. He gives it to us to use as our own, and he gives it without ceasing. As the physical universe is kept alive by the perpetual shining of the sun, so from the Lord God of heaven and earth proceeds all that gives strength and beauty to human

life and character. Man can no more boast of his own glory and achievements than the moon with her reflected light can boast of her shining. Truly God is all in all. Man does not shun evil and do good from himself, but only *as* from himself, in the freedom which the Lord imparts.

HEAVEN AND HELL.

In what has preceded it has been more than once said that the divine purpose in creating men was the formation of a heaven of angels for the enjoyment of eternal blessedness. The same purpose is also manifest in the providential care which is extended over each member of the human family. It is, however, to be noted that heaven is in its essence a state of mind and life. Our Lord says, "Behold the kingdom of God is within you." Again, he teaches that no one can enter into that kingdom, who does not first receive it as a little child. Heaven is a state of goodness, peace, and innocence, a state of love to God and man; and heavenly happiness is the joy which pertains to that state. There is no delight worthy to be compared with it.

But the Lord, as we have seen, uses no coercion. He leaves us free to do his will, or to disregard it. He tries to lead, but does not force, us into the ways of happiness. Man is not compelled to go to heaven unless he so chooses. Too many, alas! choose not to go. They are unwilling to come into the peaceful, happy state of the angels. They find no pleasure in the exercise of love to the Lord and to one another. Selfish gratification and worldly aggrandizement offer the only attractions which they value. So they turn away from what is good and true to embrace the evil and the false; and the condition which they make for themselves is called hell. The only reason why there is a hell is because there are human beings who will have nothing to do with heaven.

Although heaven and hell are primarily and essentially states of mind, they yet have a real and objective existence in the spiritual world. But that world is not far off in space. It is within and around us always. It is the present no less than the future

dwelling-place of our spirits, that is, of ourselves, of every part of us but our natural bodies. Spiritual substance and natural substance are entirely distinct from each other. Their relation is not that of continuity, but of correspondence. In other words, it is the relation of internal to external. As the soul is to the body, as the thought is to the speech, as the affection of the heart is to the expression of the face, so is the spiritual to the natural. Wherever natural life exists spiritual life is embodied in it. The flow of life is always from within outwards. Its original fountain is the uncreated One, who is the Inmost of all. From him it passes by successive steps or degrees through the world of spirit into the world of nature. Hence, corresponding to every earthly object is something spiritual, from which it draws its life. The law of correspondence, which has been previously spoken of, is also the law of causation and creation.

The spiritual world thus being an inner realm of life, which comprehends all spirits whether in the flesh or not, its inhabitants are not separated in space from men on earth, but are constantly associated with them. It is literally true, as the Scriptures teach, that the Lord gives his angels charge over us to keep us in all our ways. It is likewise true that we are subject to temptations from infernal spirits. We cannot see those angels and spirits with our natural eyes, nor do our physical senses give notice of their presence. Such outwardly conscious relations with them are not according to the normal order of our being. Our connection with them is on the plane of interior thought and affection. In all good feelings and desires we are associated with good spirits; and every evil lust which we cherish gives token of the presence of demons. It is indeed possible that the inner sight of any man should be opened, that is, the sight of his spiritual body, and that he should behold the spirits and angels who are attendant on him. This is possible, but not, as a rule, orderly or permissible. Such were the supernatural appearances recorded in the Scriptures. The angels who were seen by the patriarchs and prophets did not come flying down through

space. They, as well as others mentioned in the New Testament, were all the while in the spiritual world, and were brought to the knowledge of any one who saw them only by the opening of his spiritual eyes. Yet this, as has been intimated, was an exceptional experience, and was permitted for a special purpose.

"There is," says Paul, "a natural body, and there is a spiritual body." The New-Church doctrines amplify this teaching by showing that the spiritual body is an essential part of every human organism, that it is created and born with man himself, that it is composed of spiritual substances, even as the natural body is composed of natural substances, and that it continues to live after the natural body is consigned to dust. Death is but the laying off of the natural body. When it takes place man comes into the conscious exercise of his spiritual faculties. In his spiritual body he awakes in the spiritual world, and there he lives forever.

Thus awaking, he is the same man as before. To suppose, as many have done, that after death a marvellous and total change comes over him is a gratuitous assumption. His state of life continues to be of the same general character. In so far, however, as it is at variance with itself it must first be brought into unity. Everything of an external nature which is not in harmony with the internal and real character is gradually put away. The power of concealment is lost, and the words are perfectly fulfilled: "There is nothing covered that shall not be revealed; neither hid that shall not be known." When this result is attained, each one, made transparent to himself and to others, finds his way to heaven or hell. Whichever of the two it be, it is the abode of his own choice. Its inhabitants are those with whom he feels in closest sympathy. They whose home is heaven are surrounded by pure and lovely objects, in correspondence with their mental states, while the wicked in hell see their own passions and fantasies embodied in living shapes before their eyes. In both cases the world around faithfully images the world within.

MARRIAGE.

Swedenborg in his old age wrote a book with the following title: "Delights of Wisdom concerning Conjugal Love; after which follow Pleasures of Insanity concerning Scortatory Love." In his other writings, also, he not unfrequently refers to the sacred relationship between man and woman. His teachings on this subject have been greatly misunderstood, and not a little perverted, chiefly, perhaps, for the reason that the latter part of the above-named work seems to authorize certain practices which the religious sentiment of the Christian world condemns. It has been apparently forgotten by some readers that the author in those passages to which they object is not treating of what is abstractly right and in itself desirable, but under the general heading "Pleasures of Insanity" is engaged in classifying the various degrees of offence against the marriage relation and the pure life which leads to it. Some of these he characterizes as greater evils, others as lesser ones; some are totally destructive of conjugal happiness, others not so much so. The latter are represented as permissible, only in the sense that they are preferable to the former, and under divine providence may serve as a means of preventing them. They are permissible as wars, prisons, capital punishment, and cauterization are permissible. There is nothing good in them, nor do they furnish the slightest warrant to any person aiming to lead a good life for departing from the highest standard of Christian rectitude.

On the other hand, all that Swedenborg says on the bright side of this great question tends to lift the mind above the plane of natural and worldly thoughts into the very atmosphere of heaven. Starting as usual from the Scriptures, he finds in the declaration that God in the beginning made man in his own image, male and female, authority for believing that the division into sexes is a part of the original plan of creation, that the masculine and feminine natures are essentially unlike each other, and that when they are joined in an orderly union

of one husband with one wife a more full and perfect image of God is produced. He maintains, moreover, that the distinction between the two is so radical as not to be obliterated by death, but that the man continues a man and the woman a woman forever. The Lord's reply to the Sadducees, "In the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage," is accepted as true in the sense that there are no marriages in the other life of a Jewish type, or of the merely natural and worldly kind with which we are too familiar here on earth; but it must not be interpreted as meaning that the eternal union of soul with soul is a thing unknown. The origin of marriage is declared to be in the twofold nature of the Lord himself, — in his love and wisdom, which are communicated to the male and female in different degrees and proportions. In man's nature, so far, at least, as it is outwardly manifested, the intellectual characteristics are most prominent; while woman's nature is strongest on the side of will and affection. This difference between them is the very ground of their fitness for each other.

The New-Church teachings on this subject lead away from all that is of the earth, earthy, to what is spiritual and heavenly. A young man who under their influence should seek the partner of his life could not fail to look first of all for elevated and congenial traits of mind and character. Taught also the transcendent value of personal purity, such an one must needs shun in affection and thought as well as in act whatever in any manner or degree does violence to the highest ideal of holy marriage. He will make temporal and worldly considerations subordinate to those which are fundamental and eternal.

ESCHATOLOGY.

In the early part of this paper allusion was made to the doctrine of the New Church concerning the second advent of the Lord, and the fulfilment of apocalyptic prophecies. That doctrine with its underlying principles is in brief as follows. From the beginning God has maintained a direct and positive relationship with men on earth. He has never left them in

total ignorance of himself and of his purposes. At no time have they been wholly destitute of divine revelation, though a few only among them might be in possession of it. But whether possessed by few or many, it has served to keep open the channel of communication between the Heavenly Father and his human family ; and wherever it was received affirmatively and intelligently, there the church existed. From time to time, however, churches or dispensations have fallen away from their primitive purity, have run their course, and have been succeeded by others. On every such occasion the Lord has again manifested himself, and has made a new revelation of his truth.

The spiritual history of mankind on the earth is marked by several successive periods, each one covering the lifetime of a church. One such period began with the most ancient people called Adam, and continued to the time indicated by the flood. Another coincides with the history of the Israelites down to the coming of the Lord. When that event took place the first Christian church started on its career. But its end was foretold in prophecy. The Lord declared that that age also would be consummated. The expression "consummation of the age" (*συντέλεια τοῦ αἰῶνος*, wrongly translated "end of the world") was frequently on his lips. Swedenborg interprets it as referring to the completion of the spiritual epoch then in its commencement, and he maintains that the first dispensation of Christianity after many years of gradual decline was actually terminated in the middle of the last century. Corrupted by false doctrine and evil life, it could no longer perform the office of a true church by serving as a living medium of communication between the Lord and men. It lost all spiritual vitality. A new revelation of truth was made, viz. that of the internal sense of Scripture, which Swedenborg himself was instrumental in proclaiming. The unfolding of this deeper meaning of the divine word is the second coming of the Lord ; a coming not, indeed, to the bodily senses, but to the mind and heart.

Accompanying the new revelation were unusual occur-

rences in the spiritual world. That world has always been the theatre of events far more than men have known. The dwelling-place of all who have ever lived and died on the earth, it must needs have the largest share in whatever concerns human order and happiness. At the close of a church or dispensation it could not but be affected by the prevalent corruption. And inasmuch as it is the mediate source of life and influx to the natural world, with which it is in close and constant connection, it must be the real seat of all important changes in the condition of mankind. When the Lord was visibly present in the flesh the greater part of his work was not done in this world, but in the other. He was, as we have seen, engaged in conflicts with unseen foes, the spiritual enemies of men. He was conquering hell and bringing assured peace and tranquillity to heaven. The good effects which followed his advent were due mainly to this cause. So, too, at his second coming the work which he did was primarily spiritual. Angels and spirits clearly perceived it, while on earth it was almost wholly unperceived. He renovated the spiritual atmosphere. He effected, in fulfilment of prophecy, a general judgment in that life beyond the present, where alone it can be effected. But the results of what took place have gradually become more and more perceptible in this lower and outer sphere of existence; insomuch that it is rapidly becoming a matter of current belief that we are living in a wonderful new age, in which the minds of men are stimulated to unwonted activity, and turned into countless new channels of thought and aspiration, by influences which former ages have not known. There is "a new heaven and a new earth" in the sense that there is a wholly new and different state of things in both worlds.

SWEDENBORG'S VISIONS.

A few words seem to be demanded on the subject of what Swedenborg claims to have seen and heard by the opening of his spiritual senses. As is well known to all readers of his works, he says repeatedly that intercourse with spirits and

angels was during twenty-seven years a part of his daily experience. No professed New Churchman can doubt that he speaks on this point with entire truthfulness. The work which he had to do in learning and teaching the internal sense of the word, with the doctrines contained therein, made it necessary that he should understand the laws of spiritual life to which that sense relates. If he had not become acquainted with the conditions of existence in the other world, the Bible would have remained a sealed book to him as to others. It would be a great mistake to suppose that what he says concerning that world is the most important or the most distinctive of his teachings. It occupies no primary place in the estimation of those who read his writings with acceptance. Moreover, in all his narrations touching his own spiritual experiences he constantly appeals to reason, and connects the statement of facts with the enunciation of principles in such a way as to produce the conviction that the facts must be as he states them, because in the nature of things they can be no otherwise.

CONCLUSION.

In reviewing the previous remarks I am painfully impressed with their inadequacy, not only on account of their imperfect treatment of the subjects selected for consideration, but on account of the many points omitted. A measure of incompleteness may, however, be pardoned to one who attempts within the brief limits of a magazine article to survey the whole field of religious thought. The need of brevity may likewise not unnaturally have given rise to a certain dogmatic form of statement not desired nor intended. But be these things as they may, my chief purpose will have been accomplished if I have succeeded in conveying a general conception of Swedenborg's teachings as a new, distinct, and complete system of Christian doctrine. Such, at least, they appear to those by whom they are affirmatively regarded. That the organized body of avowed believers, at present so small and feeble, will finally become the acknowledged church of the

future it may be presumptuous to claim; but that the doctrine itself will gradually extend its influence until it overshadows the whole earth, is no more to be doubted by one who accepts it than he can doubt his own existence. Sanguine as this language may seem, it is not wholly unwarranted by the manifest signs of the time, which show the most marked and rapid changes in the modes of Christian thought towards the standard pointed out by Swedenborg more than a hundred years ago.

ARTICLE VI.

A SOBER VIEW OF ABSTINENCE.

BY REV. DANIEL MERRIMAN, WORCESTER, MASS.

THIS Article contains an endeavor to find in some of the facts and circumstances of the case a reasonable footing for a practical abstinence from alcoholic drinks as a good rule, — the dictate of common prudence and Christian benevolence. The words “practical abstinence” or “abstinence” are used instead of “total abstinence,” inasmuch as this latter phrase, though apparently more definite, is in reality less so, because it is necessary in practice to qualify it with other words, such as “beverage,” which, again, are indeterminate, and open a wide field of discussion as to what constitutes a convivial, dietary, or medicinal use. It is enough if abstinence can be established as the best general rule, to which use forms the exception. Our inquiry falls under three heads: first, prudential abstinence; second, benevolent abstinence; third, objections.

I. PRUDENTIAL ABSTINENCE.

The reasons for abstinence as a measure of prudence are derived (1) from physiology, (2) from experience. Let us consider, then,