

THE BIBLE  
*or Word of God*  
UNCOVERED AND  
EXPLAINED

+

*After the Revelation given through*  
EMANUEL SWEDENBORG

+

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In today's world, with its many problems and its distractions, many are so preoccupied, that they find little time for serious thought beyond the call of their profession or other occupations. But what of religion?

Many have a feeling that possibly they are not doing their duty towards religion. Yet the hope of finding a satisfactory answer to the questions that are raised in connection with it seems futile. The endless controversies, and the divergence of sects, the unsolved problems, turn some away and many take up what they call practical religion, as if the theoretical from which the practical stems were of little or no importance. Many feel when they go to church, that the preaching is not satisfactory to the intelligent and practical man. They find that it is either so emotional that it does violence to a man's intelligence, or it is rather cold and formal.

And yet the problem of why we are here on earth is a most important one, the solution of which would have vital results. If a man found himself in another country,

and did not know for what reason he was there, he would certainly feel ridiculous, to say the least. And yet here we are, and most people do not know the reason why, and, what is still more strange, seem to care less.

If the question be asked, for what purpose are we here on earth? One of two answers is usually forthcoming. The answer of the religious man is often that God created men in order that He might have someone to praise and worship Him; the answer of the non-religious, that there is no purpose, but that man is the chance development of protoplasm due to heredity and environment. Neither of these answers seems in the least satisfactory. The first makes God a self-loving and self-centered potentate; the other, on reflection, is seen to be contrary to all probability.

## THE REASON FOR CREATION

A wise man must recognize that the reason for creation is that God is love, and that the object of creation is that God may love men, and that men may love God, and that men may love one another.

This idea is expressed by Swedenborg as follows: "It is the nature of love, not to love self, but others, and to be joined with them by love. It is also the nature of love to desire to be loved by others, for from this there is conjunction. Love consists in this, that its own should be another's. In God there is nothing of self-love." (*Divine Love and Wisdom*, no. 47.)

If God did not create us from love, and in order that

we might love Him, and that He might love us, we are but puppets in a meaningless pantomime.

We take it for granted that all but the gross materialist will agree that God must have created us from love, and with the object that we might love Him, and that He might love us. But there is one essential requirement to all genuine love, namely knowledge. It is impossible to love someone of whose nature one is ignorant.

Suppose you have met someone, but do not know anything of his feelings, nor understand anything of the motives of his actions; you certainly cannot love such a one. If we have no knowledge or understanding of the nature of God, it is impossible to love Him.

If one cares very much for another, it will be his greatest desire to be known and understood by his friend. If God loves mankind, He must surely desire that men should know as well as love Him.

## KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF GOD ARE ESSENTIAL

But how can we know and love God? Some say we can know and love Him from what we see of Him in creation; that we can see His hand in the beauties of nature. But can we truly love Him from this alone? If a man were to go to a far country, and there see a city containing beautiful parks and also slums; if he saw that part of the city was orderly, and other parts lawless; if he heard not a word as to whether the ruler was a man or a woman, a president or a king; could that man, from what he beheld of the

effect of the government, love the ruler of the country with all his heart? Surely not. How much less can we love a God of whom we know absolutely nothing, not even as to whether He has a form or is formless? The very notion is absurd.

### WHERE GOD MAY BE FOUND

If then, we are convinced that God created man from love, and in order that men might love Him, where are we to find Him? And how can we know Him if nature is entirely inadequate to reveal Him to us? Certainly nowhere but in Religion. But when we look out upon the world, we find that many religions have flourished, and many still flourish, and that each claims to be of God. How, then, are we to know which is the true Religion, or whether one is more true than another? That there is some truth in all religions, we admit. But if God truly loves man, and desires that man should love Him, it necessarily follows that He must reveal Himself perfectly, in so far as man is able to receive. And all enlightened men may see that nowhere has God revealed Himself to men in His perfection as He has in His Written Word. All "holy books," with the exception of the Word, contain things which obviously prove that they are not directly from God; no other Books could be immediately from God. We are aware that there are difficulties in believing that the Bible is Divine. These difficulties will be considered shortly; but no matter how great these difficulties may appear, it remains a fact that love, especially Divine Love, must reveal itself perfectly; and it can be seen that the Bible, or the Word, as we prefer to call it, is the most perfect revelation of God's Love and Wisdom.

## THE SEARCH FOR NEW LIGHT

This little book is not addressed solely to the busy man who has not been actively interested in religion. Reader, if you have been brought up in a faith in the Catholic Church, or in one of the Protestant Churches, and, feeling an affection for your Church, have worked for its welfare, and have been a faithful attendant at its administrations, still do you not feel that it has left many questions unanswered? Because you feel affection for your Church, is this any reason why you should not continue to search for a greater light? That your parents before you have found solace in the Church, and have, by their tender care, instilled into you from your infancy an affection for your religion, is indeed a reason for loving the Church in which you have been born and brought up, but it is by no means a reason for slackening in your search for all the truth that comes from God. If your distant ancestry had ceased to search for truth, you would still be a worshiper of Odin. If the Apostles of the Lord had remained in faithful obedience to the instruction of Jewish priest and scribe, the Christian Church would never have been founded. If the heathen were to remain faithful to the teaching of their childhood, the Christian Church could not spread.

But, what is of greater importance, the Gospels themselves point to a time when new light would be given. The Lord Himself declared: "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth; for He shall not speak of Himself, but whatsoever He shall hear, that

shall He speak; and He shall show you things to come." (John 16: 12, 13.) "In that day I shall show you plainly of the Father." (John 16: 25.)

Are there not many things in the Gospels difficult to understand—things which no one has explained to you? For example, do you understand the most important of all truths,—the nature of the Divine Trinity? Many believe that such things are not meant to be understood, but listen to the words of the Lord: "He that heareth the Word of the kingdom, and understandeth it not, then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart." (Matthew 13,19.) Has this not happened with many? That it is not the will of God that there should be a lack of understanding is clear from the words of the prophet Jeremiah, "And I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding." (3:15.) God is a "God of light," and giveth understanding; and those who do not encourage us to seek knowledge and understanding do not teach the Word of God.

God, when He created man, gave him two great gifts —the power to love, and the power to understand; and if these two faculties are not directed towards God, man ceases to be in the image and likeness of God. Understanding, without love, is cold, formal, and lifeless; love, without understanding, is sentimental, emotional, and lacking in truth and power. These two great gifts of God must be united if we are to worship God in spirit and in truth.



## GOD IS IN THE GOSPELS

In spite of the many obscure passages and hard sayings in the Gospels, he that bath eyes to see can discern the hand of God in these holy books. But some will say, "We indeed acknowledge that the Gospels are inspired from heaven, at least in parts; but does this necessarily mean that every word is from God?" Friend, if God is love, and wishes to reveal Himself to mankind, He must necessarily do it in a Divine way. This most important of all works could not have been done in an imperfect and fragmentary manner. If one writes to another whom he loves, does he not take pains that the letter may contain nothing but his own sentiments? If the letter were in any way changed, would he not feel indignant, and immediately do all in his power to see that the true version should reach the one dear to him? How much more is this the case with God? That the Lord spoke in parables, and spoke things which still had to be explained, He Himself declared. Yet the Gospels are as He intended, and wait for nothing but the promised testimony of the Spirit of truth, in order to be understood plainly.

## THE OLD TESTAMENT

But if we accept the Gospels as being of God, what of the Old Testament, that unique book which so many are now coming to doubt? Is this history of the Jewish people, with its descriptions of battles, of cruelty, of ignobleness—this curious scripture which at times appears to make of Jehovah a cruel and partisan

God,—is this the Word of God? Reader, one cannot accept the New Testament and deny the Old. These two Testaments are so united that they cannot be separated. Deny the Old Testament, and you undermine the New. There is no teaching of the Lord Jesus Christ which is more emphatic than His teaching that the Law and the Prophets are the Word of God. "Think not that I am come to destroy the Law or the Prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill. For verily I say unto you, until heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled." (Matthew 5: 17, 18.)

How many times we read in the Gospels that Jesus did such and such a thing that a prophecy might be fulfilled. And when speaking to the Apostles after His resurrection He said: "O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken. Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into His glory? And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, He expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself." (Luke, 24: 25-27.)

The more we consider the matter, the more evident it becomes that the Law and the Prophets were given, in order that they *might* reveal, in types or representatives, the Messiah who was to come. The whole of the Old Testament is a great parable, as said the Psalmist: "I will open my mouth in a parable; I will utter dark sayings of old." (Ps. 78: 2.) The Israelites were a people chosen to enact a Divine Drama which in every respect should prefigure the Christ who was to come. But men have been unable to interpret the Book, and it has been, as it were, sealed, as said the Prophet Isaiah: "And the vision of all is become unto you as the

words of a book that is sealed, which men deliver to one that is learned, saying, Read this, I pray thee; and he saith, I cannot; for it is sealed; and the book is delivered to him that is not learned, saying, Read this, I pray thee: and he saith, I am not learned."

(29: 11, 12.)

If we do not elevate our minds, if we do not interpret the dark sayings, if we cannot unfold the parable, but instead interpret literally this Divine story, we fall into hopeless doubt and obscurity; our faith becomes weak, and we fail to perceive the spirit; as Paul said to the Corinthians: "Who also hath made us able ministers of the New Testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life." (2 Corinthians. 3: 6.)

## THE SEALED BOOK

But who is able to interpret this Book? Who can read the Old Testament aright, or even the New? And who can reveal the things which are contained therein? This is, in truth, the Book seen by John in vision: "And I saw in the right hand of Him that sat on the throne a Book written within and on the back, sealed with seven seals. And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, Who is worthy to open the Book, and to loose the seals thereof? And no man in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the Book, neither to look thereon. And I wept much, because no man was found worthy to open and to read the Book, neither to look thereon. And one of the elders said unto me, Weep not; behold, the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the Book, and to loose the seven seals thereof." (Revelation 5: i-s.) Is not the same thing meant by

these words as by the words of the Lord Himself? "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. When He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth . . . and He will show you things to come." (John 16: 12, 13.) "In that day I shall show you plainly of the Father." (John 16: 23, 25.)

To some, the declaration that the Bible, or Word, contains secret and hidden things will seem like a fanciful idea. Many will not comprehend it, but will say within themselves, as did the Disciples of the Lord when they heard Him speak in dark parables, "Who can hear it?" These words of the Lord were: "Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, bath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day.

For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. . . . Many therefore of His disciples, when they had heard this, said: This is a hard saying; who can hear it?" (John, 6:54, 55, 60.)

It may, indeed, seem hard to believe that the Old and New Testaments are the Word of God Himself. It may be difficult for some to believe in the Virgin Birth and the resurrection. The miracles of the Lord may prove a stumbling block to others. But think of the only alternative, namely, that the Bible is not the Word of God, that Christ was not God on earth! God then becomes once more an unknown God, an invisible Being, of whom we know, of a surety, nothing—a far-distant God, whom none can love; and the world is reduced to a puppet show, in which men play their little parts to no purpose.

## THE SPIRIT OF TRUTH

The vital and most important question is: Has the Lord given unto us "the spirit of truth which shall lead men into all truth"? Has He shown us "plainly of the Father"? Has the "Lion of the tribe of Judah prevailed to open the Book"? And has He "loosed the seven seals"? And if the Lord has done so, where and how has He done it?

What would be the natural way for Him to do this? It would indeed be, as always in the past, by putting His words in the mouth of a man, and filling him with His Spirit, so that he might reveal things which are to come. But has the Lord done this? And if so, by whom?

## EMANUEL SWEDENBORG

More than a hundred and fifty years ago, a learned man, Emanuel Swedenborg, wrote that through him this prophecy had been fulfilled; that he, the humble servant of the Lord, had been called to this mighty office. A strange and wonderful claim! This is a claim which no thinking man can accept without a careful investigation and a deep searching for the truth. On the other hand, a claim which no one has the right to reject without serious consideration and a careful weighing of what Swedenborg presents in substantiation of this remarkable statement. For the man who uttered it was a man held in universal respect by all who knew him; a man who was known

throughout the learned world; a man honored by nearly all who have studied him.

Swedenborg was a member of the Swedish House of Nobles, and an acquaintance of the King of Sweden, who evinced great respect for him, both as to his character and his learning.

Swedenborg is universally honored on account of his works on philosophy and science, particularly on account of his masterful works on cosmology and anatomy. He was well past fifty years of age when he first declared to the world that he had been called to his holy mission. From a personal standpoint, by writing as he did, he had much to lose and nothing to gain. He had been assured of an honorable position in the history of human development. There was no one in Sweden more highly honored or more greatly respected, no one whose integrity was less open to doubt. He realized that the greater part of the skeptical world would look upon his claim as preposterous, without even seriously considering it. Yet this venerable and learned man wrote as he did with no expectation of being honored for it; he did so at great expense to himself, and without hope of reward; in fact, he requested his publisher to contribute to the spreading of the Bible any profit which might accrue from the sale of his works. He sought for no personal following, nor did he attempt to organize a Church; although he foretold that a Church would be established on the basis of what was written by him.

But while these considerations are good reasons for making a serious inquiry and study of his

works, they are in themselves not sufficient to convince us of the truth of what he wrote. We will later take up this claim, and will prove that what Swedenborg said about his mission is a certain fact, and that the evidence is sufficient to show all who search eagerly for the truth that, in his writings, God has revealed to mankind the ultimate truths of religion so long sought for. But, before examining the ground of belief in his declaration, we will quote the words of Swedenborg himself, in which he proclaims his Divine mission. For to him that searcheth for what is right the words of truth ring clear, like the tone of a bell in which there is no crack or flaw; while the words of a deceiver, though most artfully arranged, reveal their falseness to the sensitive ear.

## THE TESTIMONY OF SWEDENBORG

In a work entitled *The True Christian Religion*, Swedenborg writes as follows: "The Second Coming of the Lord is effected by the instrumentality of a man, before whom He has manifested Himself in Person, and whom He has filled with His Spirit, to teach from Him the Doctrines of the New Church by means of the Word.

"Since the Lord cannot again manifest Himself in Person, and yet He has foretold that He would come and establish a New Church, which is the New Jerusalem, it follows that He will effect this by means of a man, who is able not only to receive the doctrines of that Church in his understanding, but also to publish them by the press. That the Lord manifested Himself before me, His servant, that He sent me on this office, and afterwards opened the sight

of my spirit, permitting me to see the heavens and the hells, I testify 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.

"To the end that the Lord might be constantly present, He revealed to me the spiritual sense of His Word, in which sense Divine Truth is in its light, and in this light the Lord is continually present." (Numbers 779-80.)

In the opening words of the work *Conjugal Love*, Swedenborg states: "I foresee that many who read the things which follow, and the memorable things related at the end of the chapters, will believe that they are inventions of the imagination; but I asseverate in truth that they are not inventions, but things actually done and seen; nor were they seen in sleep, but in a state of full wakefulness. For it has pleased the Lord to manifest Himself to me, and to send me to teach the things which will be of the New Church. To this end He has opened the interiors of my mind and spirit, whereby He has granted me to be in the spiritual world with the angels and at the same time in the natural world with men, and this now for twenty-five years." (No. 1.)

These words, coming as they do from one whose integrity cannot be doubted, as is proved by the overwhelming testimony of his contemporaries, must be true. During his lifetime even his strongest opponent said that Swedenborg "has at all times been universally honored, and besides has been distinguished for his learning in the sciences of mining



and physics." Words coming from one whom even his antagonist praised, and whose opponents, in respect to his life, could find nothing to criticize, must surely be sincere. Many will say to themselves: "Yes, possibly sincere, but the man must have been mad!"

## NO REASON TO DOUBT SWEDENBORG'S DECLARATION

What great prophet or seer has not been considered mad by the worldly wise? Festus said to Paul, "Thou art beside thyself; much learning doth make thee mad." But Paul said, "I am not mad, most noble Festus; but speak forth words of truth and soberness." (Acts 26: 24, 25.) The Pharisees and Sadducees said of John the Baptist, "He hath a devil." (Matthew II: 18.) And of the Lord Himself, we read: "There was a division therefore again among the Jews for these sayings. And many of them said, 'He hath a devil, and is mad; why hear ye Him?' Others said, 'These are not the words of him that hath a devil.'" (John x: 19-21.)

That Swedenborg spoke in perfect soberness, and was very far from being mad, is proved by his life. He had been publishing numerous theological works anonymously for many years before he declared that he was their author, and during this time no one saw anything strange in his conduct. At the same time he was taking part in the discussions of the Swedish House of Nobles, and Count Höpken, at one time Prime Minister of Sweden, said of him: "He possessed a sound judgment upon all occasions; he saw everything clearly,

and expressed himself clearly on every subject. The most solid memorials, and the best penned at the Diet of 1761, on matters of finance, were presented *by him.*" (*Tafel's Documents concerning Swedenborg*, Vol. III, p. 408.) Swedenborg's claims caused people to question his state of mind, and the above statement was made in answer to a letter which someone had written to the Count. Such testimony might be increased indefinitely; but the real proof of Swedenborg's soundness of mind is in the books he wrote—works written throughout with the forcefulness of truth, and with a clarity and penetration of mind that are nothing less than marvelous.

In a letter addressed to the King of Sweden, Swedenborg wrote as follows:

"That our Savior visibly revealed Himself before me, and commanded me to do what I have done, and what I have still to do, and that thereupon He permitted me to have intercourse with angels and spirits, I have declared before the whole of Christendom, as well in England, Holland, Germany and Denmark, as in France and Spain, and also on various occasions in this country before their Royal Majesties, and especially when I enjoyed the grace to eat at their table, in the presence of the whole royal family and also of five senators and others; at which time my mission constituted the sole topic of conversation.

"Subsequently I have revealed this before many senators; and among these Count Tessin, Count Bonde and Count Höpken (a gentleman of enlightened understanding) have found it in truth to be so; without mentioning many

others, as well at home as abroad, among whom are both kings and princes.

"All this, however, the office of the Chancellor of Justice, if the rumor is correctly stated, declares to be false, when yet it is truth. Should they reply that the thing is inconceivable to them, I have nothing to gain-say, since I am unable to put the state of my sight and speech into their heads, in order to convince them; nor am I able to cause angels and spirits to converse with them; nor do miracles happen now; but their very reason will enable them to see this, when they thoughtfully read my writings, wherein much may be found which has never before been discovered, and which cannot be discovered except by real vision and intercourse with those who are in the spiritual world. In order that reason may see this, I beg that one of your excellencies may peruse what has been said on this subject in my *book on Conjugal Love*.

"If any doubt should still remain, I am ready to testify with the most solemn oath that may be prescribed to me, that this is the whole truth and a reality, without the least fallacy.

"That our Savior permits me to experience this is not on my own account, but for the sake of a sublime interest which concerns the eternal welfare of all Christians. Since such is the real state of things, it is wrong to declare it to be untrue and false; although it may be pronounced to be something which cannot be comprehended." (*Swedenborg Documents, Vol. III. pages 373, 374.*)

These are certainly not the words of a man whose mind is not clear; nevertheless many will not

believe; they will say the thing is impossible. We can only answer in the words of Swedenborg: "I am aware that few will believe that anyone can see the things which exist in the other life, and thence be enabled to give any account of the state of souls after death, because few believe in the resurrection; and, in fact, fewer of the learned than of the simple. They affirm indeed with the mouth that they rise again, because it is according to the doctrine of faith; but still they deny it at heart. Nay, some openly avow that if anyone should rise from the dead, and they should see, and hear, and touch him, they would then believe. Were this, however, to take place, it must take place for every individual; and, after all, not a single person who denies in heart would thus be persuaded, but thousands of objections would arise in his mind which would confirm him in his negative conclusion.

"Some, nevertheless, say they believe that they shall rise again, but not till the day of the last judgment, with respect to which they have formed the opinion that all the things in the visible world are then to perish. But as that day has been expected in vain for so many ages, they still have doubts. But what is meant by the last judgment, spoken of in the Word, will be briefly stated later. From this it may appear what sort of persons there are at this day in the Christian world.

"Lest, therefore, men should any longer confirm themselves in this false opinion, it has, by the Lord's Divine Mercy, been given me, while I am in the body in this world, to be in spirit in the other life, and there to speak with souls who have risen again not long after their decease, and indeed with almost all whom I knew in the life of the body, but who have since died; and to see stupendous sights, which have not entered into the idea of any man. Since very many say that they would believe, if anyone should come to

them from the other life, it will now be seen whether they will be persuaded in spite of their obstinacy of heart." (*Arcana Coelestia*, no. 1886, Preface.)

### THE TOUCHSTONE OF TRUTH

But how can we tell whether this revelation of the New Church is true or not? What is the test by which we can verify it? The proof of a religion is this: If it is true, it will appeal to the intelligence of those who are genuinely seeking for truth, and it will also be satisfying to the heart. A genuine religion must be rational and consistent; it must shine with light, so that those who are searching may see truth in its own light,—see it clearly so that the clouds of doubt are dissipated; it must also agree with the former revelation, as given in the Word of God, when clearly understood. Besides this, it must stir a man's love of God more deeply; it must raise his mind to heaven, and bring into his heart a fuller love of his neighbor; it must help him in struggles and temptations, and must bring consolation to those who seek it. If it fulfills these requirements, it is truly of God. That the New Revelation fulfills these requirements, yea, that it does far more, will be found by those who love truth for its own sake.

### A SPECIFIC PROOF

But there is also a more specific proof, a proof that is so sure that, when once seen, further doubts are

impossible. To illustrate what we mean: Reader, if a man taught you a new language, taught you to read it so that you could take delight in its literature, there would be three things that you would be certain of, three things which no one could make you doubt. The first of these would be that the language you knew was a real language, and not a meaningless lot of letters; secondly, you would be sure that you could read the language; and thirdly, you would be certain that the man who taught you the language knew it, and had taught you correctly. On none of these points could there be any doubt.

Swedenborg tells us that the Bible, or Word of God, is written according to the language of correspondences, and if once we know this language, all the obscure parts become clear, and the Love and Wisdom of God shine through in every verse.

After publishing *The Apocalypse Revealed*, a work explaining the Book of Revelation, Swedenborg wrote to a friend as follows: "This year there has been published the *Apocalypse Revealed*, which was promised in the treatise on the *Last Judgment*, and from which it may be clearly seen that I converse with angels, because not the smallest verse in the Apocalypse (Book of Revelation) can be understood without revelation. Who can help seeing that by the New Jerusalem is understood a New Church, and that its doctrines can be discovered by the Lord alone, because they are described there by mere typical things, i.e., by correspondences; and, likewise, that these can be published to the world only by means of someone to whom revelation can be granted?"

"I can solemnly bear witness that the Lord Himself has appeared to me, and that He has sent me to do that which I am doing now; and for this purpose He has opened the interiors of my mind, which are those of my spirit, so that I can see those things which are in the spiritual world, and hear those who are there, which privilege I have now had for twenty-two years.

"The mere bearing witness, however, does not suffice at the present day to convince men of this; but anyone of sound understanding may be confirmed by the testimony of my writings, and especially by the *Apocalypse Revealed*. Who has heretofore known anything about the spiritual sense of the Word; and about the spiritual world; or heaven and hell; also about man's life after death? Should these and many other things be perpetually hidden from Christians? They have now for the first time been disclosed for the sake of the New Church which is the New Jerusalem, and that they, its members, may know them; others, indeed, shall also know them, who yet do not know them on account of their unbelief." (Swedenborg *Documents*.)

## SWEDENBORG NOT A SPIRITIST

Before proceeding further we must note that Swedenborg was not what is called a spiritist, and that he condemned spiritism. He himself had never striven to tear aside the veil that separates the two worlds, and he was as surprised as anyone that God had called him to this mission. In answering a letter addressed to him, he said: "The Lord, nevertheless, so disposes it that

spirits and men are seldom brought together so closely as to converse with one another; for by intercourse with spirits men are brought into a condition as to their souls, that they are speedily in danger of their life; wherefore I would dissuade all from cherishing such desires. The Lord Himself has been pleased to introduce me into converse and intercourse with spirits and angels for the reasons that have been explained in my writings; wherefore I am protected by the Lord Himself from the many desperate attacks and attempts of the evil spirit." (Swedenborg *Documents*.)

#### THE SPIRIT WHICH GIVETH LIGHT

Let us now turn to the explanation of the Word of God, as given to us in the Writings of Swedenborg. Let us examine this language of correspondences by which all things are made plain. But first we must warn the reader that learning a language is not an easy task, and that a hasty judgment cannot be made. Certain difficulties may arise which can only be solved by earnest study, but to him who perseveres the truth will appear.

The language of correspondences is a very ancient language—a language which, to a certain degree, is imbedded in all other languages. It is not something artificial, but is inrooted in the very nature of the human mind. Everyone knows something of this language, but the greater part of it has been lost.



For example, everyone realizes that when the *heart* is spoken of in the Word, love is meant; but few know that by the *stomach* is meant the memory, as when it is said, "Out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." (John 7: 38.) Everyone knows that by *light* in the Word is meant the truth by which a man sees the things of the spirit; yet few know that by the *sun* is signified God, from whom that light comes, although it is written in the Psalms, "For the Lord God is a sun and shield." (84: II.)

All know that by *washing* is signified the removal of evil, but all do not realize that the *water* with which man washes stands for the truths by which evils are removed. It is common knowledge that a *fox* is the symbol of cunning, but it is almost unknown that the *horse* is the symbol of understanding, and in the Word it means especially the understanding of the Holy Scripture. (See Rev. 1: 11-13.)

That *to advance or go forward* means the increase of intelligence, is imbedded in the very nature of our speech; yet, strange to say, few know that in the Word by *journeying* from one place to another is signified a change of state or point of view in regard to something of the Church.

"Who cannot see that, when Isaiah said, "And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills, and all nations shall flow unto it," (2: 2), that he did not refer to the mountains of this world? Nor was it merely a poetic fancy, but that mountains signify all that is exalted, all that is above the commonplace things of our life, and especially the love of God.

There is nothing more natural than the correspondence that exists between the things of the spirit and the things of nature. We can see this correspondence most clearly manifested in the relation of mind and body. If a man is sincere, every expression of his face corresponds to the state of his mind; it is evident that there is a most close and natural relation between a happy frame of mind and a smile, between a weary mind and a sigh. The relation of the natural images used in the Word to the spiritual things which they signify is quite as obvious when one comes to understand and see them.

If we study ancient history, we find that in those times symbolism played a much greater part in men's lives than it does at present. Every thought and feeling was represented by some object in nature; tribes were universally represented by animals, which were called their *totems*. This attitude of mind has not entirely ceased; for England is still thought of as symbolized by a Lion, and America by the Eagle.

Recent studies in psychology have tended to emphasize the symbolization that takes place even in dreams. There is nothing in one's mind which may not be symbolized in dreams by some person or object. Swedenborg discovered many years ago this relation of mental states and objective appearances in dreams which is just now coming into prominence. He also showed that the whole Word was a symbolization or representation of the Divine Mind.

To understand the general misapprehension of the Bible, or Word, let us put ourselves in the place of a future race which has no symbolism. A race of this

type, seeing men such as Uncle Sam and John Bull, which were obviously connected with countries, could not make head or tail of the cartoons they dug up, and would arrive at strange conjectures.

To the ancient men who wrote the Word, the modern literal interpretations would appear equally absurd. It is a repetition of the story of the woman of Samaria. The Lord spoke to her spiritually and she could only understand His words naturally or literally. He said to her: "If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink, thou wouldst have asked of Him, and He would have given thee living water." The woman said unto Him: "Sir, Thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep; from whence then hast Thou that living water?" (John 4: 10, ii.)

In a short work such as the present one we cannot fully demonstrate the spiritual sense which everywhere lies concealed in the Word. We can only give a few illustrations of the Divine meaning that lies hidden beneath the letter, and then refer our readers to the two great works of Swedenborg which present this sense,—*the Arcana Celestia* and the *Apocalypse Revealed*, where anyone who is in search of the things of God can find the mysteries of the Holy Scripture fully revealed.

The Bible, or Word of God, is a body in which the Spirit resides. The literal or natural sense clothes the Mind of God as a garment clothes a man. But the Word has in it passages in which the Spirit and internal sense shine through the letter, and appear openly to the eyes of man, in the same way as a man's face and hands

are not covered by clothing, but reveal to others his personality. The "Golden Rule" and the "Two Great Commandments" are examples of the numerous places in the Gospels where the spiritual sense stands uncovered and open to view.

## EXPLANATIONS OF SCRIPTURE THE HOLY CITY

The first verse that we will consider is the tenth verse of the twenty-first chapter of the Book of Revelation, where we read: "And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me that great city, the Holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God." (Revelation 21:10.)

What is meant by this Holy City, which is called the Wife of the Lamb? Certainly not a material city. If we consider what Jerusalem was, the thing which it stands for becomes evident. Jerusalem was the capital of the Land of Canaan; but it was even more important as the only place where the Israelitish people were permitted to perform their holy acts of worship. Here was the temple; here the high priest officiated. In Jerusalem the Scribes and Pharisees gathered together and studied the Scriptures, and formulated their doctrines. Thus it is perfectly natural that Jerusalem stood for the worship and doctrines of the Jewish people. Jerusalem was the only place where doctrine was formulated, and came to be a symbol or representative of the Doctrine of the Church. When, therefore, the Lord wished to predict the revelation of the "Heavenly Doctrines" which He promised during His life on earth, He would naturally refer to these doctrines under the type of the Holy City, New Jerusalem. Once

we grasp this idea, the meaning involved in the description of the City scarcely needs explaining. It follows that by the *walls* of the City are signified the defense of that doctrine by which its truths are kept pure; that by its *gates* are signified the teachings which first make an appeal to the one in search of truths, and which thus introduce a man, and enable him to enter into the glory of its heavenly secrets; and by the *streets* are signified the way of life of those who go therein.

That a *city* stands for a principle or doctrine of life, is proved beyond a doubt by the verse in Revelation which reads: "And their bodies shall lie in the streets of the great city, which is spiritually called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified." (Revelations ii:8.)

John knew, from the literal point of view, that the Lord was not crucified in Sodom or Egypt. This is not a slip of the pen, but is so written for a Divine reason. That the Lord was not literally crucified in one of these places is also implied by the words, "Which is spiritually called Sodom and Egypt."

## BABYLON THE GREAT

Let us now turn to one of the cities mentioned in the Old Testament, and examine the dark saying in reference to the great city Babylon, found in Psalm 137, verses 8-9, where we read: "O daughter of Babylon, who art to be destroyed: Happy shall he be that taketh and dasheth thy little ones against a stone."

What are we to make of such a passage as this? A more cruel command could scarcely be given.

Are these the words of a God of infinite Love? Do these words contain a message from heaven? Yea, Reader, they contain a most needed message, if they are but understood aright. It is a universal rule that men hear God according to their own desires. If God speaks to a cruel people, they twist His words into words of cruelty. If He speaks to a proud people, they turn His words into words of pride. The Jews were a cruel people, and loved cruelty; wherefore, when Jehovah the Lord spoke to them, they interpreted His words as cruel words. Still, in order that a Word or Revelation might be written, which should contain within its bosom the Divine Love and Wisdom, God provided that what was inscribed should contain within it the wisdom of the angels.

In the verse that we are considering let us first see if we can discover the meaning of the city which is spiritually called Babylon.

Babylon ruled over the first world empire. She ruled autocratically, according to the will of her potentates, and not according to any system of law. The will of the city of Babylon took the place of law and justice in the lands over which she ruled. Babylon, therefore, came to symbolize the love of such autocratic rule,—the love of rule according to the whim of one's own desire, and not according to Divine law. This love of rule is not confined to kings and princes. A man may tyrannize over his family; a woman may strive for the power to enforce her will upon her friends; a man of business may command his employees without regard to justice. In any case wherein one tries to carry out his will, and impose it on others, without regard to right and justice, it is the same

ancient love that was symbolized or represented by that great city, Babylon.

If this love of rule, this love of tyranny, once takes hold of a man, it holds him in its grip, so that he who has found delight in it can scarcely escape. It is most important, therefore, that it be rooted out in childhood. A boy should not be permitted to tyrannize over his fellow schoolmates; as soon as this dangerous love is born in the heart of man, it must be rooted out. The head of such a love must be crushed against a stone,—against the foundation of truth, which a *stone* symbolizes.

It now becomes obvious that the spiritual meaning of the command, "Happy shall he be that taketh and dasheth thy little ones against a stone," is that those are blessed who are humble, and who, as soon as they see the love of domineering arising in themselves, destroy it by means of the principles of truth and justice, before it has a chance to grow.

#### WHEN PETER WAS OLD

Let us now turn to one of the chapters of the Gospel, and see the meaning which lies hidden beneath the surface like a vein of precious metal under the earth. We read that the Lord spoke in parables, and "without a parable spake He not unto them." (Matthew 13: 34.) Some of these parables the Lord in part explained, but the greater part He left undiscovered until the time that He should come and "show them plainly of the Father."

The passage we have chosen to explain is in the last chapter of the Gospels,—the twenty-first chapter of John, and we will dwell particularly on the

verses which read: "Verily, verily, I say unto thee (Peter), When thou wast young, thou girdedst thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldest; but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not. This spake He, signifying by what death he should glorify God. And when He had spoken this, He saith unto him, Follow Me. Then Peter, turning about, seeth the disciple whom Jesus loved following . . . Peter seeing Him saith to Jesus, Lord, and what shall this man do? Jesus saith unto him, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? Follow thou Me." (21: 18-22.)

The twelve Apostles of the Lord, as well as the twelve Sons of Israel, symbolized or represented all the general principles which go to make up the Church. Peter and John, being the leading disciples, stood for the two leading principles in the Church, namely, faith and love or good works.

That Peter stands for faith is obvious from the Gospels themselves. When the Lord asked his disciples for a declaration of faith, it was Peter who gave it: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." (Matt. 16: 16.) "Peter" is the Greek for a rock, which name was given to him by the Lord for an especial reason. The Lord said: "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build My Church." (Matt. 16: 18.) Faith is like a rock upon which the Church is founded, just as a rock is the foundation upon which the temple is built.

That John represented love or good works, is also evident. The whole of the writings of John bear wit-



ness to the love he bore to the Lord, and the love which a true Christian feels towards his neighbor. And because he stood for such love, he is called in the Gospels the beloved disciple."

That the words from the twenty-first chapter of John have a deeper significance than appears on the surface, must be felt by all who love the Word of God. While the death of Peter was a tragedy, the Lord, in foretelling his death, implied a greater tragedy than the death of any single man. He implied the death of the faith of the Christian Church. The command of the Lord, thrice repeated to Peter, "Lovest thou Me? Feed My sheep!" (John 21: 15-17) has a foreboding of ill. It implies that the love of those for whom Peter stood might grow cold, and that they might cease to feed the sheep of the Lord's fold.

Anyone who can raise his mind into the light of heaven can see that the instruction to Peter, "Feed My sheep," was essentially given to all who should teach the faith of the Christian Church. And the words imply that there was danger that this faith might not be taught in spirit and in truth. By "when Peter was young," in the broader sense, is signified the Christian Church in its beginnings; when faith went "whither it would," guided by the light of truth. But when Peter was "old," signifies when the Christian Church had lost the spirit of its youth, and when worldly ambitions and interests ruled in it. Then we read that "another should gird Peter, and take Him whither he would not,"—that is, the Church would formulate man-made creeds, by which the Church would bind men's conscience and compel them to believe what it taught, although not led by the light

of truth. Nevertheless it is implied that some, signified by John, would remain until the Lord Jesus Christ should come again to establish His Church anew. John stood for all who have a genuine love of the Lord, and who follow the Lord by obeying His words, even though as to important matters of faith—such as the nature of the Divine Trinity, the manner of salvation, and the nature of the resurrection—they might be in ignorance.

## THE UNFAITHFUL CHURCH

Many take for granted that the Christian Church has remained in the pure light of the Gospel, and that the faith and life of the Christian Church has remained pure. But this is not the teaching of the Word of God. The Lord said: "Nevertheless when the Son of Man cometh, shall He find faith on the earth?" (Luke 18:8.)

Paul said: "This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, truce-breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof." (II. Timothy : 1-5.)

Who can deny that this is a picture of modern times? But of this subject we will speak further when we come to the consideration of the passages treating of the Coming of the Lord and the Last Judgment.

We will now turn to one of the early chapters of the Book of Genesis, and give a short explanation of some of the things involved, before proceeding to the great doctrines upon which the New Church is founded.

## THE SLAYING OF ABEL

In the fourth chapter of Genesis we read as follows: "And Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground . . . Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the Lord; and Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of the flock, and of the fat thereof. And the Lord had respect unto Abel and to his offering: but unto Cain and his offering He had not respect . . . And it came to pass that when they were in the field, that Cain rose up and slew Abel his brother . . . And the Lord set a mark upon Cain, lest any finding him should kill him." (Genesis 4 2-5, 8, 15.)

Before explaining this passage, we must say something about the first eleven chapters of Genesis. It is obvious from the Scripture account that there was actually such a man as Abraham and his children. We feel that he was a personality; we see Jewish characteristics stand out in the story of his life. The history of his life and the lives of his descendants was used to portray, in the spiritual sense, a Divine drama; but, as to the story in the letter, it is obviously the account of an ancient patriarch.

But when we turn to the chapters of Genesis which lead up to the account of Abraham, we find them

written in an entirely different style. The men are evidently merely symbolic; they are not human personalities, but symbolic types. The things said about them could not have literally occurred; as for example, that "Cainan lived seventy years, and begat Mahalaleel; and Cainan lived after he begat Mahalaleel eight hundred and forty years, and begat sons and daughters." (Genesis 5: 12, 13.) It is also obvious that the account of Noah and the flood was not a literal account of something that took place.

The first eleven chapters of Genesis, which treat of these symbolic people, were copied from an ancient book. They recount a history which in fragments was scattered all over the world. But what of the people who first wrote this account? They were evidently an intelligent people—God-f caring men. It therefore follows that they wrote as they did with no intention of deceiving; and yet they knew that what they wrote was not an actual account of things which had taken place literally. At present we frequently speak of a nation as an individual; we picture France at war as a woman with a drawn sword in her hand. In most ancient times it was customary to speak of churches as individuals, and to represent their advance and decline by the actions and deeds of these significant figures.

That Adam, Cain and Abel were not the three original men, is evident from the account itself, in that Cain took a wife, that he built a city, and that God set a mark upon him, lest any finding him should slay him.

Adam represented the first great Church on earth; and all that is said of him represents the advance and decline of that most ancient Church. We have already said that Peter and John represented the two great

fundamentals of the Christian Church—faith and love. Here Cain and Abel stand for those same two principles in the first Church on earth.

From the Gospels (John 20) it can be clearly seen that the Good Shepherd stands for the leadership of love and charity, the sheep follow the Shepherd because He is good to them and they know His voice. The sheep of the Lord's pasture are those who are in good, and from this obey the voice of the Shepherd. But the Lord is also spoken of as a Sower, and the seeds are said to be the Word of God, and those who are in faith have these seeds sown in their heart. Thus the Sower therefore stands for the leadership of faith and the insemination of truth. It can therefore be seen that the love and charity of the first Church, signified by Adam, was represented by Abel, the shepherd, while its faith was represented by Cain, the sower. As long as these two dwelt together as brothers in unity, all was well. But when Cain, representing faith, rose up against Abel his brother, the Church became accursed. How often has this been the history of Churches! They are at first founded on love to God and brotherly affection, but afterwards become cold and formal, until they begin persecuting those who do not consent to their particular formula of creed and doctrine; thus they take the part of the devil, in the name of faith in God. By Jehovah "setting a mark upon Cain, lest any finding him should slay him," is signified that after charity has been killed in a Church, and men come to trust in faith alone, God provides that faith may still be preserved. For while faith alone is of little value, it is better than having neither faith nor charity.

A large book could easily be written on the spiritual interpretation of Scripture; but as this has

already been done in the revelation to the New Church, and the object of this book is to present a summary of the teaching of our Church to the inquiring reader, we will now treat of its fundamental beliefs in regard to God and the life after death.

### THE DIVINE TRINITY

The great unsolved mystery in the Christian Church has always been the nature of the Divine Trinity. Many leaders in the Church have warned against trying to understand or solve this great mystery; yet there is no authority in the Word of God for taking this point of view. The whole teaching of the Gospels is to search for light and understanding in regard to the things of God. That a full explanation of the Divine Trinity was not given by the Lord Himself is evident, and is implied in His own words when He said, "The time shall come when I shall show you plainly of the Father." That time has now come, and he that hath eyes to see can see the Divine Trinity in light—see it in a way that will appeal to those who thirst for knowledge of God, and desire to know the mysteries of heaven.

When we speak of the Divine Trinity, most people take on a weary expression, as if we were bringing forth to view a worn-out garment in which no one had any real interest. They seem to conjure up a vision of dry-as-dust, hair-splitting arguments. But, as a matter of fact, it is undoubtedly the most living problem a man has to face. Reader, if you did not know whether your father was one person or three, would you not give up everything to be able to search

and find out the truth in regard to the matter? But surely the knowledge as to whether the true God is one or three persons is of far greater importance. The relation of father and son is but a temporal relationship, whereas the relation of a man to his God is eternal. If men retained in their bosom the least spark of love to God, how eagerly they would search for the explanation of this mystery.

It is as the Lord said, "Because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold." (Matt. 24: 12.) This is the reason why the New Church,—the only Church which can give a satisfying answer to this most vital of all problems,—grows so slowly. The Christian Church has become indifferent to God. The love of God is a flame that has died down. It has become like a man who does not care whether he has three fathers or one.

## THE DEITY OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST

Not long ago, nearly everyone declared a belief in Christ as one of the Divine Trinity—that He was God and Man. This belief is rapidly dying out. In so-called Protestant countries, more and more are coming to look upon Him merely as a great and wonderful man. Even within the Protestant Churches, the Deity of Christ is being brought into question by the so-called "Modernists." Alas! Do they know what they are doing?

If there is one thing that Christ taught plainly, it was that He was God. He said: "Before Abraham was, I am." (John 8:58.) "All power is

given unto Me in heaven and in earth." (Matthew 28: 18.)

In John, chapter one, we read of Christ that, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was God; all things were made by Him. He was in the world, and the world was made by Him. And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, as of the Only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." (John I: 1, 3, 14.)

If the Modernists are right in denying the Deity of Christ, then were the Jews right in taking up stones to stone Him when He said, "I and My Father are one. The Jews answered Him, saying, For a good work we stone Thee not, but for blasphemy; and because that Thou, being a man, makest Thyself God." (John 10: 30-33.) Surely, if Christ were not God, then, indeed, was He the most blasphemous and arrogant of men. But some will say: "We doubt that the account of His birth and resurrection and the quotation of many of His sayings are accurate." If that is the case, we know very little about Him. Certainly there can be no doubt that the Jews who heard Him speak understood that He made Himself God. If Christ is not God, then no man knows God, no one loves Him. Who can love an invisible force? As the Bible says, we are either in the image of God, and He has come and dwelt among us, or the very word "God" is a meaningless vanity—a fanciful idea invented by philosophers.

If, Reader, you can see that Christ was God and Man, let us now turn to the Divine Trinity, and see if we can understand it.



Some things about the Divine Trinity are a little difficult to understand, but he who perseveres will receive a hundredfold. Once the explanation of this great problem is found, you will be able to love God with all your heart, soul and understanding.

## THE HOLY SPIRIT

We will first consider the Holy Ghost, or the Holy Spirit, as it is easier to see what is meant by it than by the Father and Son. The orthodox idea of the Holy Spirit is, that it is a Divine Person who has existed from eternity; and many people take for granted that this is the teaching of the Bible. That this is not the case, is clearly evident from the words of the Lord in John: "For the Holy Spirit was not yet, because that Jesus <sup>was</sup> not yet glorified." (7: 39.) In the King James Version of the Bible, the word "given" is added, but this word is not found in the original Greek. Nowhere in the Old Testament is the Holy Spirit mentioned; and the whole teaching of the Word is, that the Holy Spirit should proceed from the Lord Jesus Christ after His glorification. In connection with the birth of the Lord, it does indeed speak of the Holy Spirit. As soon as the Lord was conceived, the Holy Spirit had a beginning, but it was not fully the Holy Spirit until the Lord was glorified.

But what *is* the Holy Spirit? Orthodox theology calls it a Divine Person, but nowhere in the Word of God is there any authority for calling the Holy Spirit a Person. Nowhere in the New Testament do we read of God as a Trinity of Persons. Many picture the Holy Spirit as a Divine messenger who communicates the

will of the Father and Son to men. But is not this the idea of a child? Does God, who is everywhere present, need to send a messenger to see that His will is carried out? If we read the Gospels carefully, it becomes clear that the Holy Spirit was not a Person, but was something which came from the Lord. When the Lord appeared to His disciples after His resurrection we read that "He breathed on His disciples, and said, Receive ye the Holy Spirit." (John 20:22.) It must be evident to all who consider this passage with an unprejudiced mind that the Lord, when He breathed on them, was communicating His own Spirit to His disciples, and was not sending another person. When the tongues of fire descended upon the twelve Apostles (Acts 3), it is obvious that this signified that the Spirit of their Lord and Master had come upon them, and not that there was another person present. When the Holy Spirit was seen descending "in a bodily shape like a dove" (Luke 3:22), it must surely be regarded as a symbol of the Spirit of God, and not as a separate individual. The Comforter is referred to as the Spirit of truth, which is surely the same as the Spirit of the Lord. In the Gospel of John, where the Lord said, "And I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you forever" (John i: 16), there is the appearance as if the Comforter might be another Person; but as if to avoid any danger of His disciples misunderstanding His words, He adds in the following verse, "I will not leave you comfortless; I will come to you." (John i: 18.) In other words, the Lord said that *He was* the Comforter. And His Spirit was also the "Spirit of truth," which should lead them "into all truth." (John 16: 13).

We all know that a great general can fill his army with his spirit. Is it not obvious that the Lord can fill the Church with His Spirit, and that this Spirit is the Holy Spirit?

By the Holy Spirit is signified all the Divine influence which proceeds from the Lord. This moving Spirit is called in the Writings of the New Church the Divine Operation or the Divine Working, and is one of the three great attributes which make up the Trinity which is in God.

## THE FATHER AND THE SON

Let us now turn to the consideration of the Father and the Son. In the Gospels, there is a strong appearance at times that these were two different Persons. We read of the Son praying to the Father, and of a voice from heaven answering the Son. If then, we consider the Father and Son to be two distinct Persons, each of which is God, how can we really think of God as one? If we hold this idea in mind, we really think of two Gods, no matter how much we say one. In spirit we pray to two Gods, although with the mouth we speak of one; as is implied in the Athanasian Creed itself, where we read: "We are compelled by Christian truth to acknowledge each Person by Himself to be God and Lord; so we are forbidden by the Catholic Religion to make mention of three Gods or three Lords." In other words, we must think of three separate Gods, but must not make mention of them. Reader, if you are an orthodox Christian, think of the prayers which end: "We pray thee for the sake of Thy

Son," and consider whether you have any other idea than of two Gods with different intentions, one of whom is willing to change His mind for the sake of the other. Is there no way of avoiding this dilemma of thinking of two or three Gods while we say one, and still believing implicitly in the Gospels?

The orthodox teaching of the Church, as it was established in the fourth century, declares that "the Divine Trinity of three infinite, equal and almighty Persons existed from eternity, and that Christ was born from eternity." On the other hand, the Apostles' Creed, a more ancient statement of doctrine, makes no mention of a Divine Trinity from the beginning, but speaks of Christ as being born of the Virgin Mary in the process of time. Here is a great difference—a difference which changes the whole of theology. With which of the two ideas do the Gospels agree? But before considering the statements concerning the nature of the birth of the Lord, it is important to note that a Son born from eternity is a meaningless expression. Being born implies a certain act, which, if it took place, could not have been from eternity; besides, birth without a mother is a meaningless expression. Nowhere in the Bible do we find the least suggestion of a Son born from eternity; the whole idea was a pure invention of certain leaders of the Church during the early part of the fourth century.

## CONSTANTINE AND THE CREEDS

Let us here digress for a short space to examine how the orthodox idea of the Trinity arose. We have

stated that in the Apostles' Creed there is no mention of a Son born from eternity. In the whole of the Word there is not a word about God being three Persons. The Apostles had a simple faith, and what they did not understand they let rest until light should be given them from on high. The same may be said of the Apostolic Fathers. The whole effort of the early Christians was directly to the development of love to God and brotherly relations with fellow Christians. They were a wonderfully brave body of men and women. In order to be a Christian in those days of bitter persecution, one had to be brave and whole-hearted in his devotion.

In the early part of the fourth century, a great change came about. Constantine the Great, Emperor of Rome, became a Christian. Nothing more fatal could have befallen the Christian Church. Thousands of the corrupt aristocracy of Rome joined the Church for political reasons. The whole spirit of the Church changed. The Christian Church had indeed won the whole world, and lost its own soul. From now on, the spirit of domineering over the world, which had characterized Rome as a city, was transferred to the Church. Intolerance showed its head. The Athanasian Creed, the first of the official Creeds to speak of God as three persons, closes with the words: "This is the Catholic faith which, except a man believe faithfully, he cannot be saved." All freedom of thought was banished. Men had to believe as believed the autocrats who wrote the creeds, or be threatened with eternal damnation. There is therefore good reason for questioning the Creeds, and for returning to the Bible with the intention

of making a search for its genuine doctrine,—with the idea of seeing whether the New Revelation gives the light which has so long been awaited.

### CHRIST BORN

Let us consider the passages in connection with the birth of the Lord, and see whether they indicate a Son born from eternity or not. We read in Luke: "The angel said to Mary, Behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a Son, and shalt call His name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Most High. And Mary said to the angel, How shall this thing be, seeing I know not a man? And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee; therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God." (1:31-35.)

Here we read of Mary's conceiving from the Holy Spirit, and from the Overshadowing of the Most High. No mention is made of a Son of God having existed previously. The Son of God spoken of is in the future tense only; the Holy Thing born of her was to be called the Son of God. If orthodox Christianity were correct, the passage would have read: "The Son of God descended, and was conceived by her."

The testimony of Matthew is to the same purpose: The angel said to Joseph in a dream, "Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. And Joseph knew her not until she had brought

forth her firstborn son; and he called His name Jesus." (1: 20, 25.)

Nowhere, when the Lord speaks of the Father, does He mention that He was born from eternity. The natural inference, in every case in which He mentions His Father, is that He was conceived from the "Power of the Most High."

## THE LORD FROM ETERNITY

It is indeed taught that the Lord did exist from eternity. For He said: "Before Abraham was, I am." But there is no mention of His being born from eternity, and no mention of Him as existing as a Person, or being separate from God, before being born on earth. In fact, in the only place that this subject is treated of, we are told that He was God before He descended.

The opening words of the Gospel of John read: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." By a man's word we mean his truthfulness; by God's Word we mean His Divine Truth. God is Divine Truth, or what is the same, Divine Wisdom, and He is also Divine Good, or what is the same, Divine Love. By the "Word from the beginning" is meant the Divine Truth in God; this was "with God and was God," and it was this same Divine Truth that descended and became the Son of Man. It was this Divine Truth by which "all things were made that were made." And within the Divine Truth was the Divine Good, which the Lord called His "Father."

## THE SUPREME DOCTRINE

The greatest and most important teaching of the New Church is, that it was God Himself, called Jehovah in the Old Testament, who descended and came into the world, and that the Lord and the Father are one, as He Himself said, "I and My Father are one." (John 10: 30.) "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father." (John 14: 9.) They were not two, but one Person; nowhere in the Bible does it say that they were two Persons. And again and again in the Old Testament it says that Jehovah God Himself would come into the world, beside whom there is no God. Reader, if you think of the Father and Son as two Persons distinct in-their actions, how can you really think of God as one? Many illustrations are given from time to time in the attempt to demonstrate this proposition, but it nevertheless remains a fact that in so far as a man thinks of God as being more than one Person, he is thinking of God, not as one, but as three. He is failing to obey in spirit the first and great commandment: "Hear. O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord."

## THE UNITY OF GOD

How strong are the statements emphasizing the oneness of God! The following quotations are from the forty-fifth chapter of Isaiah: "I am the Lord (Jehovah), and there is none else; there is no God beside me. I girded thee, though thou hast not known



me." (The Hebrew for the word "Jehovah" has, as a rule, been translated "Lord," which is printed in small capital letters in the common editions of the Bible.) "That they may know from the rising of the sun, and from the west, that there is none beside me. I am the Lord (Jehovah), and there is none else." (Verses 5, 6.)

Who hath told it from ancient time? Have not I of the Most High? And Mary said to the angel, How shall this thing be, seeing I know not a man? And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee; therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God." (1: 31-35.)

Here we read of Mary's conceiving from the Holy Spirit, and from the Overshadowing of the Most High. No mention is made of a Son of God having existed previously. The Son of God spoken of is in the future tense only; the Holy Thing born of her was to be called the Son of God. If orthodox Christianity were correct, the passage would have read: "The Son of God descended, and was conceived by her."

The testimony of Matthew is to the same purpose: The angel said to Joseph in a dream, "Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. And Joseph knew her not until she had brought forth her firstborn son; and he called His name Jesus." (i: 20, 25.)

Nowhere, when the Lord speaks of the Father, does He mention that He was born from eternity. The natural inference, in every case in which He mentions

His Father, is that He was conceived from the "Power of the Most High." Lo, this is our God; we have waited for Him, and He will save us; this is Jehovah; we have waited for Him; let us exult and be glad in His salvation." (Isaiah 25: 8, 9.) Again: "Behold, the Lord God will come in strength, and His arm shall rule for Him. He shall feed His flock like a shepherd; He shall gather the little lambs in His arms; He shall carry them in His bosom." (Isaiah 10: 10, ii.)

There is also a prophecy, in the book of Zechariah, of the New Church and its belief in God as one Person: "In that day Jehovah shall be king over all the earth; in that day Jehovah shall be one, and His name one." (14:9.)

Note this striking verse in the sixty-third chapter of Isaiah: "And I looked, and there was none to help; and I wondered that there was none to uphold: therefore mine own arm brought salvation." (v. .)

We read nothing of Jehovah's sending His Son into the world. On the contrary we read that "there was none to help, and none to uphold"; therefore His "own arm brought salvation." By "His arm" is evidently meant the Human Nature which the Only God took on, in order that He might come among men to save them from their sins, and from the power of hell.

## CHRIST NOT KNOWN BY CHRISTIANS

How long God has been with the Christian Church, and yet the Church has not known Him! They have not known that Christ and the Father are one Person. The Church is indeed like the Apostles when the Lord said to

them: "No man cometh unto the Father but by me. If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also; and from henceforth ye know Him, and have seen Him." But the Church still asks, as did Philip, "Show us the Father, and it sufficeth us." And the Lord, who has now come again as He promised, tells us plainly of the Father, and answers us, as He answered Philip: "Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? He that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Show us the Father? Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? The words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself; but the Father that dwelleth in me, He doeth the works. Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me." (John 14: 6-11.)

The Lord was grieved because Philip did not understand, grieved because he did not realize that He and the Father were one Person. Consider how long a time the Lord has been with the Christian Church, and yet it, also, has not fully known the Lord. Like Philip, it does not realize that He and the Father are one, and that the man who sees the Lord sees the Father, who dwelleth in Him as our soul dwells in our body. How few have realized the meaning of the words of Paul to the Colossians: "For in Him (Christ) dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily." (Colossians 2: 9.) Yet if this were not the case—if the Lord were not one with the Father, in Person and in Essence—how could He say: "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth"? (Matthew 28: 18.)

Jude realized that it was God Himself who had descended and become the Savior, for he closed his Epistle with the words: "To the only wise God, our Savior, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen."

## THE DIVINE TRINITY IN ONE PERSON

If the Father and the Son are one in Person, and the Holy Spirit is the Divine power which proceeds from the Lord and operates in the Church, what then is meant by the Divine Trinity which is frequently spoken of in the Gospels? The key to this perplexing problem is found in the first chapter of Genesis, where it is said that "God made man in His own image, after His likeness." (Genesis 1:26, 27.) If God created man in His "image" and "likeness," and there is a trinity in God, there must be a similar trinity in man. The great trinity in man is that of soul, body and operation, and there is a similar trinity in the Lord Jesus Christ. With Him, the soul was called the Father, the Human Nature that He took on was called the Son of Man, and His operation and influence on the Church was called the Holy Spirit.

While God had not a human body until He came on earth, He was always essentially in the human form, in the same way as in an acorn there is contained in potency the form of the oak, and in the atmosphere is contained potentially the geometric form of the snowflake.

## DIFFICULTIES REMOVED

While this explanation does away with many of the difficulties which have existed in the past in regard to the Divine Trinity, other difficulties will immediately present themselves to the mind of the reader, such as the following: Why did the Lord pray to the Father, and on one occasion say that the Father was greater than He? Why is it said of the Son that He sat on the right hand of the Father? And how was it possible for God to be dwelling on earth as a little child, and at the same time rule over heaven and earth? To understand such hidden things we must first know something of the nature of the soul and its relation to the body.

The soul of a man is the first or highest receptacle of the life that comes from God. A man is born with this soul; it gives life to both the body and the mind; yet it is superior to man's consciousness. The soul of a man is from his father, and his body from his mother, while the mind partakes of both. As a man's soul is a receptacle of life—that is, it is a wonderful form which receives the life going forth from God—therefore a man is a different person from his father. When the soul of a new human being is separated from the soul of its father, the two have an independent life and individuality. Father and son are entirely distinct and separate individuals, each receiving his life from God.

With the Lord the case was different. The soul of the Lord, which was from His Father, was not, as with man, a receptacle of the life that goes forth from God, but His soul was Life Itself, and was therefore

God. A soul which receives life can be separated, and may become two or more receptacles of life; but life itself cannot be divided; the Infinite cannot be separated. The Lord as to His soul was, therefore, one with His Father—one in Life and one in Person. His inmost life was from the Infinite, and indeed was the Infinite, as we read in John: "The Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not.... And 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." (John I: i, 10, 14.)

When a man is born, he has a soul and a body, but as yet he has no mind, except in potency. As soon as an infant begins to receive sensations from the world by means of his body, the soul begins to work on the sensations that it receives; and from this interplay of the soul and sensation, the mind commences to grow. The same took place with the Lord. He learned as other children learn, but far more quickly and perfectly. The mind or human which grew within Him partook partly of His Divine Nature, which He had from the Father who dwelt in Him, and was His soul, and partly from Mary, who had given form to His body. During His lifetime He gradually put off the infirmities that came from Mary, and as He did so He perfected His Human and made it Divine. In the Gospels, this process of perfecting or making His Human Divine is called glorifying: "Jesus said, Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in Him. If God be glorified in Him, God shall also glorify Him in Himself, and shall straightway glorify Him." (John 13: 31, 32.)

"These things understood not His disciples at the first: but when Jesus was glorified, then remembered they that these things were written of Him." (John 12: 16.)

"The Holy Spirit was not yet, because Jesus was not yet glorified." (John: 39.)

From these passages it can be seen that the Lord was gradually glorified, and that He was not fully glorified until the time of His resurrection. Before He was glorified, He spoke at times as if His Father were greater than He, and prayed to the Father as if to another. But after He had risen from the dead, when He appeared to His disciples in the glory of His Divine Human, He said: "All power is given unto me in heaven and on earth." (Matt. 28: 18.) The human which the Lord had taken on during His life on earth had become purely Divine, and one with the Father; so that, as Paul said of Christ, "In Him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily." (Col. 2: 9.)

Before the Lord was glorified, He had, as it were, two minds, one which partook more fully of the nature of His soul, and the other which partook more closely of the nature of the body. In this respect He was like us. We have a higher mind, which wills to obey the dictates of our soul, and a lower mind, which would obey the desires of the body. Man sometimes obeys one, and sometimes the other. The Lord always submitted to and obeyed the higher. He was "without sin." The fact that the Lord prayed to the Father does not make Him another Person. David spoke to his soul, saying, "Why art thou cast down, O my soul?" (Psalms 5.) "Praise the Lord, O my soul."

(Psalms 146: i.) Yet David and his soul were not separate persons. We may pray that our higher mind may rule within us, and we may submit ourselves to the rule of our spirit in contrast to the rule of the flesh; yet we are but one person. Reader, we must think of God as being one Person, or we cannot really think of Him as being One God.

The Lord's soul, which was God, could rule over heaven and earth, while the mind which He was forming in His body on earth was still being perfected.

What is meant by the Lord's sitting "on the right hand of God" (Mark 16: 10), can easily be understood when we know the meaning of "hand." Our hand is the medium by which we accomplish our desires; it is the means by which we have strength or power. In the Word, "hand" stands for power or ability to accomplish our ends. The passage which speaks of the Son's sitting on the right hand of the Father means the same as the verse in Isaiah, which reads: "I (Jehovah) looked, and there was none to help, and I wondered that there was none to uphold: therefore mine own arm brought salvation." (63: 5.)

That the Father Himself could not be seen as a Person, with His Son sitting on His right hand, is evident from the words of John: "No man hath seen God at any time: the only-begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father, He hath brought Him forth to view." (1:18.)

## REDEMPTION MISCONCEPTION OF ITS NATURE



From this new doctrine of the Trinity there necessarily follows a new conception of Redemption, Reconciliation and Salvation. We will first consider the orthodox doctrine on this subject.

The idea usually held is that, owing to the sin of Adam, God cursed the human race. All men thereby became "children of wrath," and no one could have been saved. The Son of God, from pity towards mankind, with the consent of His Father, descended into the world, and fulfilled the law. By His suffering on the cross He took upon Himself the punishment due the human race on account of original sin, thus satisfying the justice of the Father. The Father, seeing the suffering of Christ on the cross, was moved to pity and agreed to the salvation of all who believed on the Son, especially of those who believed that the Son had saved them by His blood shed on the cross. From this doctrine have come such statements as: "God outside of Christ is a God of fire and wrath." The result of this doctrine is that those who believe in it have a personal love for Christ, but fear God the Father. Reader, if you are a believer in this doctrine of propitiation, look into your heart and consider whether you have a real love of God. You may fear such a God, but can you truly love a God who condemned you to eternal torment before your birth, and who would not have given you any hope of salvation if it had not been for another person—His Son? If God is love, how could He have decreed such a terrible doom?

Consider, again, the idea of justice involved. If a man had two sons and one sinned; if the innocent one said to his father, "Father, punish me in the place of my brother," and the father did so, letting the guilty one go free, and punishing the innocent one, would you call that justice? No, it would be far from it. Cannot God, who is mercy itself, forgive the penitent, without requiring satisfaction by a false and abhorrent retribution, miscalled justice? How far does this idea of God cohere with the teaching of the Bible, where we read: "O Jehovah, Thy Mercy is great unto the heavens." (Ps. 57: 10.) Also: "Unto Thee belongeth mercy; for Thou renderest to every man according to his work." (Ps. 62: 12.)

"Jehovah is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and plenteous in mercy." (Ps. 103: 8.)

"Thy mercy, O Lord (Jehovah), endureth forever." (Psalms 138:8.)

"The Lord (Jehovah) is gracious and full of compassion, slow to anger and of great mercy. The Lord (Jehovah) is good to all; and His tender mercies are over all His works." (Psalms 145: 8, 9.) How can we imagine a God of love turning to wrath? A God of whom we read in the Epistle of James: "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning." 0: 17.)

The true doctrine of the atonement is contained in the words of Paul: "To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself." (2 Corinthians 5: 19.)

#### TRUE IDEA OF REDEMPTION

God took upon Himself the Human, and came into the world from love for His erring children. He came to save them, and lead them back to His fold. Some may think that God, who is all-powerful, could have performed this work from heaven. But such do not consider that God always works according to order. He acts according to His own laws. It would have been as impossible for God to descend, and come among men in His Divine majesty and glory, as it would be for the sun to draw near to the earth. No one could have stood God's presence. He, therefore, veiled Himself with a human, with which He clothed Himself according to the order He established from creation; and by means of this human He revealed Himself to men and saved them. Mankind was not condemned for the sin of their original ancestors; that was but the beginning of sin. Evil increased gradually, until it became so great that hell was threatening to destroy the human race. When this came about, Jehovah God took upon Himself a human nature so that He might come down to earth, where He might fight the power of evil, and lead into a new church those who would obey His Word. By this means He delivered the entire world from the threatened damnation that hung over it. This terrible condition overtook the world because men chose evil rather than good. And this damnation is only avoided by those who freely obey the commandments of the Lord. The passion of the cross was but the last great struggle in which the Lord conquered the power of evil, and overcame the might of the hells.

The following quotation is from the *Brief Exposition of the Doctrines of the New Church*: "That the whole of Christian Theology at this day is founded on an idea of three

Gods, is evident from the doctrine of justification, which is the head of the doctrines of the Church with Christians, both among Roman Catholics and Protestants. That doctrine sets forth the idea that God the Father sent His Son to redeem and save men, and gave the Holy Spirit to operate the same. Every man who reads, hears, or repeats this, cannot do otherwise in his thought, that is, in his idea, than divide God into three, and perceive that one God sent another, and operates by a third. Consult yourself, while listening to preaching in churches, or while praying at home, and see whether you have any other conception or thought than of three Gods; especially while you are praying or singing, first to one, and then to the other two separately, as is often done. From this the proposition is established, that the whole Theology of the Christian world at this day is founded on an idea of three Gods." (No. 35.)

## HUMAN PROPERTIES ASCRIBED TO GOD

"The doctrine of the faith of the present Church ascribes human properties to God, as that He regarded man from anger, that He wishes to be reconciled, and that He is reconciled through the love He bore the Son, and by His intercession; also that He wishes to be appeased by the sight of His Son's suffering, and thus to be brought back to mercy; and that He imputes the justice of His Son to an unjust man who supplicates it from faith alone; thus from an enemy making him a friend, and from a 'child of wrath' a child of grace. But who does not know that God is mercy and clemency itself, because He is love itself and good itself, and that these are His very being or essence? And who does not see that it is a

contradiction to say that mercy itself, or good itself, can look at man from anger, become his enemy, turn Himself away from him, determine on his damnation, and still continue to be the same Divine Being or God? Such things can scarcely be attributed to an upright man, but only to a wicked man; nor to any angel of heaven, but only to an angel of hell; wherefore it is abominable to attribute them to God."

"They who have seen that merely human properties are unworthy of God, and are yet attributed to Him, **in** order to defend a system of justification once conceived, and to veil that appearance, have said that anger, revenge, damnation, and the like are predicated of His justice, and are therefore mentioned in many parts of the Word, and are as it were appropriated to God. But by the anger of God in the Word is signified evil in man, which, because it is against God, is called the anger of God; not that God is angry with man, but that man, from his evil, is angry with God; and because there is in evil its own punishment, as in good its own reward, therefore when evil punishes the evildoer, it appears as if God did it. For this is like a criminal who attributes his punishment to the law, or like one who blames the fire for burning him when he puts his hand into it, or a drawn sword for wounding him when he rushes upon the point of it when in the hand of one defending himself. Such is the justice of God. This I can affirm, that whenever the angels hear anyone say that God from anger determined on the damnation of the human race, and as an enemy was reconciled by His Son, as by another God begotten from Himself, they are excited to vomiting; saying, What can

be more insane than to affirm such things of God?" (*Brief Exposition*, nos. 61, 62.)

## MODERNISTS

Many of those who are now known as Modernists call this orthodox theology medieval and agree with the New Church in condemning it. On the other hand, these Modernists take away God from the Church and destroy the Bible. They take God away by denying the Deity of Christ, making Him but one of the ancient wise men. Thus they make God unknown and unknowable; they turn Him into a vague phantom which no one can truly love. They destroy the Bible by denying that it is the Word of God, and that it is inspired directly from heaven.

## THE PROMISE FULFILLED

Due to the false notions that have arisen, the world came to such a pass that the only possible way of reestablishing a true religion,—a religion of light, which might lead men back to an earnest love of God and the neighbor,—was by the giving of the revelation of Divine Truth which the Lord Jesus Christ promised. This revelation has therefore been given.

## RESURRECTION

We will now turn to the revelation given us as to the nature of heaven and hell. But we must first consider the resurrection. The churches have taught in

the past that a man's body will lie in the grave until the time of the last judgment, when it will be raised out of the sepulcher. This teaching is so much against common sense that at present most people do not believe in it. We will therefore pass it by quickly, only stopping to indicate that it is not in agreement with the Word of God.

The Lord said to the thief on the cross: "To day shalt thou be with me in paradise." (Luke 23:43.) The Lord also said to the Sadducees who denied the resurrection: "Now that the dead are raised, even Moses showed at the bush, when he called the Lord the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob. For He is not a God of the dead, but of the living; for all live unto Him." (Luke 20: 37, 38.)

The whole of the parable of Lazarus and the rich man shows that those who die are living in the other world in a body, while we are here on earth. That we do not resume our natural body, but rise in a spiritual body, is most clearly taught by Paul in I Corinthians 15: 35-44, where it is distinctly shown that there is a spiritual body as well as a natural body, and that it is the spiritual body, and not the natural body, which is resurrected. The misconception and belief that men will rise from the grave with their material bodies has arisen from the fact that it is not generally known that in the Word sepulchers and graves are at times used to denote hell, and that those who are in hell are spoken of as "dead." Before the Last Judgment, there were many who had not as yet come into their places in the New Heaven, but were subject to the evil inhabitants in the lower earth,--a region on the outskirts of hell. At the time of judgment, these former

were freed, and it is this setting free of the good from the power of the evil that is signified by the graves being opened, and many of those that were dead appearing. (Matthew 27:52.) We will explain this more fully when we come to consider the subject of the Second Coming of the Lord and the Last Judgment.

We have already quoted a number of statements by Swedenborg in which he shows that the Lord granted him to live with angels and spirits at the same time as he was living on earth, in order that he might describe the life of those who have passed the great portal of death. This declaration of Swedenborg seems to many people to be incredible; and yet, if we start from the idea that God is Love, and cares for mankind, it would seem but natural that He should desire to reveal to us the nature of our eternal abode, in order that we might better prepare for it. The most natural way to give this knowledge to mankind would be to open the eyes of a wise man, so that he could see and describe the things of the spirit. If we have a real and living knowledge of the life after death, think of the great happiness it brings! We are consoled for the death of the loved ones who have left the world. And as for dying, if we have led the life that leads to heaven, we leave this world as one departing from a hovel when invited to a king's court.

Is it not the most natural thing in the world that the Lord should give us this knowledge of the kingdom into which we shall all enter? The whole record of history bears testimony to the fact that men have at times conversed with those who have departed this life. It is only a section of people in recent times who have ever



doubted the possibility of communication with the dead. It is surely unreasonable to discredit the notable witnesses of the past, merely because such communication does not take place under the conditions now prevailing.

The following description of heaven and hell, and of the resurrection, is taken from the book by Swedenborg entitled *Heaven and Hell*: "When the body is no longer able to perform its functions in the natural world, man is said to die. This takes place when the breathing of the lungs and the beating of the heart cease. But the man does not die; he is merely separated from the bodily part that was of use to him in the world. The man himself lives on; for man is not a man on account of his body, but on account of his spirit; for it is the spirit that thinks in man, and thought with affection is that which makes him to be a man. Evidently then, the death of man is merely his passing from one world into another.

"After death, the spirit of man continues in the body for a short time, but only until the heart's action has entirely ceased, which happens variously in accordance with the diseased condition that caused death. As soon as this motion ceases, the man is resuscitated. This is done by the Lord alone. Resuscitation means the drawing forth of the spirit from the body, and its introduction into the spiritual world; this is commonly called resurrection.

"How this resuscitation takes place has been told me, and also shown to me by living experience. The actual experience was granted to me so that I

might have a complete knowledge of the manner in which it takes place.

"As to the senses of the body I was brought into a state of insensibility, thus nearly into the state of the dying; but with interior life and thought remaining unimpaired, in order that I might perceive and retain in memory the things which happen to those who are resuscitated from the dead. I perceived that the breathing of the body was almost wholly taken away; but the interior breathing of the spirit continued, joined to a slight and quiet breathing of the body.

"I was in this state for some hours. Then the spirits that were around me withdrew, thinking I was dead. An aromatic odor was perceived, by which evil spirits are kept away from man's spirit when he is being introduced into eternal life. The angels who were present at my head were silent, merely sharing their thoughts with mine; and when the thoughts of the angels are received by the man, the angels know that the spirit of man is in a state in which it can be drawn from the body. This sharing of their thoughts was done by looking into my face; for in this way thoughts are shared in heaven. In order that I might know and remember how resuscitation is effected, I perceived that the angels first tried to ascertain what my thought was, whether it was like the thought of those who are dying, which is usually about eternal life; they also wished to keep my mind in that thought. Afterwards I was told that the spirit of man is held in its last thought when the body expires, until it returns to the

thoughts which the man has from his ruling affection or love in the world.

"Especially was I permitted to see and feel that there was a pulling and drawing forth, as it were, of the interiors of my mind, thus of my spirit, from the body; and I was told that this was from the Lord, and that resurrection is thus accomplished.

"The celestial (or highest) angels, who are with the one that is resuscitated, do not withdraw from him, because they love everyone; but when he comes into such a state of mind that he can be no longer affiliated with them, he longs to get away from them. When this takes place, angels from the Lord's spiritual kingdom (that is, the next lower degree of angel) come, through whom the use of light is given; for before this he saw nothing, but merely thought. The angels are extremely careful that only such ideas as savor of love shall go forth from the one resuscitated. They now tell him that he is a spirit.

"When he has come into the enjoyment of light, the spiritual angels render to the new spirit every service he can desire in that state of mind; and teach him about the things of the other life, so far as he can comprehend them. But if he has no desire to be taught, the spirit longs to get away from the company of the angels. Nevertheless, the angels do not withdraw from him, but he separates from them; for the angels love everyone, and desire nothing so much as to render service, to teach, and to lead to heaven; this is their highest delight. When the spirit has withdrawn, he is received by good spirits (spirits are those who have recently come from the natural world). As long as he continues in their company,

everything possible is done for him. But if he has lived such a life in the world as would prevent his enjoying the company of the good spirits, he longs to get away from them; and this experience is repeated until he comes into companionship with such as are in entire harmony with his life in the world. With such he finds his own life, and, what is surprising, he then leads a life like that which he led in the world.

"This opening state of man's life after death lasts only a few days. Afterwards he is led from one state to another, and finally into either heaven or hell. This, too, I have been permitted to learn by much experience." (*Heaven and Hell*, nos. 445-451.)

## LIFE AFTER DEATH

"I have talked with some the third day after their decease, when the resuscitation just described had been completed, especially with three whom I had known in the world, to whom I mentioned that arrangements were now being made for burying their bodies. I said for burying them, on hearing which they were smitten with a kind of surprise, saying that they were alive, and that the thing which had served them while in the world was being buried. Afterwards they wondered greatly that they had not believed in such a life after death while they lived in the body, and especially that scarcely any within the church so believe.

"Those who, while in the world, have not believed in any life of the soul after the life of the body is ended are greatly ashamed when they find

themselves to be alive. But those who have confirmed themselves in that disbelief seek companionship with their like, and are separated from those who have had faith. Such, for the most part, are attached to some infernal society, because they have also denied the Divine, and have despised the truths of the church. For so far as anyone confirms himself against the eternal life of his soul, he confirms himself also against whatever pertains to heaven and the church." (*Heaven and Hell*, no. 452.)

### WHERE IS HEAVEN?

But where is this world of spirit? Is it in some distant place, or is it near at hand? The Lord Himself gave the answer: "The kingdom of God is within you." (Luke 17: 21.) After death, we live as we do in our dreams, in a world not governed by natural space. The spiritual world is around us and within us; yet it is not spatial, although in it, just as in our dreams there are the appearances of spaces and distances. By this comparison of the other life with our dreams, we do not wish to indicate that our life after death is in other respects like a dream; on the contrary, we are more wide awake in the other world than in this world, and the things we there see and hear, we see and hear with the most exquisite sense. Indeed, things in that world are more real than the things of this world, just as our thoughts and desires are fully as real, or more real, than the house in which we live.

## CATERPILLAR AND BUTTERFLY

When we leave this world we leave nothing of value behind; our material body is like scaffolding which is useful for the purpose of building, but the real beauty and perfection of the house cannot be seen until the scaffolding is removed. The body with which we are clothed in the other world surpasses in perfection the body of this world, as much as that of the butterfly surpasses that of the caterpillar from whence it came.

But this can best be illustrated by quoting from *Heaven and Hell*: "When the spirit of man first enters the world of spirits, which takes place shortly after his resuscitation, as described above, his face and his tone of voice resemble those he had in the world. This is man's first state after death. But subsequently his face is changed, and becomes entirely different, resembling his ruling affection or love, in agreement with the interior things of his mind as it was in the world, and in which his spirit was while in the body. The face of his body is from his parents, but the face of his spirit is from his affection.

"When the life of the spirit in the body is ended, and the outward things are laid aside, and interior things are uncovered, he comes into this ruling affection. This is man's second state.

"I have seen some that have recently arrived from the world, and have recognized them from their face and speech; but seeing them afterwards I did not recognize them. Those who had been in good affections appeared with beautiful faces; but those that had been in evil affections, with misshapen faces. All in the other life

are brought to speak as they think, and to show in their countenance and gestures the desires of their will." (Heaven and Hell, no. 457.)

"Those who are in heaven are continually advancing towards the springtime of life, with a greater advance towards a more joyful and happy spring the more thousands of years they live; and this to eternity, with increase according to the growth and degree of their love, charity, and faith.

"Women who have died old and worn-out with age, if they have lived in faith in the Lord, and charity to the neighbor, and in happy conjugal love with a husband, advance with the passing of years more and more into the flower of youth and early womanhood, and into a beauty that transcends every imagination of beauty as seen on earth. Goodness and charity give this form of beauty, and in this manner show forth their own likeness, causing the joy and beauty of charity to shine forth from every least detail of the face, and causing them to be very forms of charity.

Some who beheld this were struck with amazement. The form of charity that is seen in a living way in heaven is such that it is charity itself which both molds and is molded, and this in such a way that the whole angel is a form of charity, as it were, especially as to the face; as is both clearly seen and felt. When this form is beheld, it is beauty unspeakable, moving with charity the very inmost life of the mind. In a word, to grow old in heaven is to grow young.

"Such forms of beauty do those become in the other life who have lived in love to the Lord and in charity towards the neighbor. All angels are such in

endless variety; and of these heaven is formed." (*Heaven and Hell*, no. 414.)

### A SPIRIT STILL A MAN

"After the death of the body, the spirit of man appears in the spiritual world in a human form, altogether as it appeared in the natural world. He also enjoys the faculty of sight, of hearing, of speaking and of feeling, as before in the world; and he is also endowed with every faculty of thought, of will, and of action, as before in the world. In a word, he is a man in all things, in every detail as he was before in the world, except that he is not encompassed with that gross body which he had before; he leaves this when he dies, nor does he ever resume it." (*Arcana Celestia*, 10594.)

### WHY SOME GO TO HELL

We have quoted a number of paragraphs about those who go to heaven; but what of those who go to hell,—to that place, the existence of which is now so frequently doubted? Does God condemn man to hell? In the work on *Divine Providence* (324) we read: "Every man is created to live to eternity in a happy state; for He who wills that man should live to eternity wills also that he should live in a happy state. What would eternal life be without it? This state of man is indeed the end of creation. From these things it is manifest that eternal life is also eternal happiness. But that only those who go to heaven are in this state, is not the fault of the Lord, but of man.



"The reason why all do not go to heaven is because they drink in the delights of hell, which are opposite to the happiness of heaven; and they who are not in the happiness of heaven cannot enter into heaven, because they cannot endure it. No one who enters the spiritual world is refused the liberty of ascending into heaven; but he who is in the delight of hell cannot remain there, since opposites act against each other. But because they were born men, and cannot die, it is provided that every man shall dwell with his like, or with those who are in a similar delight of life; the evil with the evil, and the good with the good; and it is allowed everyone, even the evil, to be in his own delight, provided he does not trouble the good."

The laws of the other world are laws of this world, and a man is of the same character there as he is here. It is obvious that a man who loves evil, and likes to talk about it, likes to be in the company of similar companions. If they were forced to live continually in the company of those who hated and detested evil, they would be utterly miserable; it would be worse than hell to them. It is therefore from mercy that God permits them to congregate together, and this congregation is called hell.

## THE FIRE OF HEAVEN AND THE FIRE OF HELL

It is important to note that God does not punish those in hell, but because they are evil they punish each other. When one commits a crime against the rest, the others are permitted to retaliate. In other words, hell is exactly like a society of evil men in this world. The hell-fire spoken of in the Bible is not material fire, nor

is it, as some have supposed, the remorse of conscience, for those in hell have no conscience. Hell-fire is the fire of hatred and lust that burns within a man's spirit in this world, and which is represented in the other world by fire.

Heavenly fire is the love that comes forth from the Lord, and warms a man's spirit, whence arises the expression that he has a warm feeling for his friends. A man who feels no love or friendship we call a cold man; one who loves whole-heartedly we call a warm friend. These expressions come from the spiritual world, where the sun of heaven, in which the Lord dwells, gives forth the light of truth which enlightens the mind and the fire of love that enkindles the spirit. Hell-fire is the opposite of this heavenly fire.

## THE JUDGMENT

From what has been said we can now see how the judgment of a man takes place after death. As is so often said in the Word, it takes place "according to his works." Or, what is the same thing, he is judged according to the intentions which animate his works; for a good deed done from an evil intention is not a good deed in the sight of heaven; and a mistaken deed done from a right intention is good in the sight of heaven. In fact, in the other life a man brings about his own judgment, according to the loves and desires which animate his life. Yea, when he finally goes to hell, he does so of his own accord.

An evil man loves evil, and therefore prefers evil company to good company. He therefore prefers the society of hell to the society of heaven. A man is not condemned to hell for the reason that God will not forgive him his wickedness, for God is mercy itself. Yea, it is on account of the mercy of God that the evil are permitted to gather themselves together; and when they are thus congregated, they make hell for themselves.

We also read that a man is saved according to faith. But by faith in this sense is not meant what a man professes with his mouth, but what he puts into practice. A good man in the other life loves truth, and when he is taught the truths of faith by the angels, if he has been in ignorance before, he gladly receives instruction; while an evil man, being proud and of a hard heart, refuses to learn, and clings eagerly to the opinions he has formed for himself.

Man therefore executes the judgment of God upon himself; and God permits him to do so, for the reason that He wills man to be free. It is freedom, or free will, which causes a man to be a man. If God compelled a man to be just and to love God, justice and love would have no value. A man so compelled would be merely an automaton.

If a man tried to compel his son to love him, the love of the son would be of no value; it would not even be love. Love, to be of any value, must come freely from the heart. It is therefore essential, in the nature of things, for God to leave man free, so that he can choose to love and serve God, or choose not to love Him.

## HUMAN JUDGMENT FORBIDDEN

The Lord while in the world said: "Judge not, that ye be not judged." (Matt. 7: i.) In the light of what Swedenborg has revealed, the meaning of these words becomes clear. Some who had been prominent in church and state, who had to all appearances led immaculate lives, were seen by him in hell, the reason being that they had thought only of themselves and of the praises of men. Their actions were all directed to winning applause, and had no regard to the welfare of their fellow men.

On the other hand, there were others, not among the so-called "faithful," and who appeared before men to have led evil lives, but who yet were in heaven. For, unknown to the world, they had struggled to lead a better and unselfish life. Their occasional failures could be forgiven, for they loved and struggled for what was better, not to be seen of men, but for the sake of God.

This idea is illustrated by the following number from *The Apocalypse Revealed*: "Ten men can do works which externally appear alike, but which yet are dissimilar with them all, because they proceed from different ends and different causes; the end or the cause rendering the works either good or evil. For every work is a work of the mind; such, therefore, as is the quality of the mind, such is the work. If the mind is charity, the work becomes charity; but if the mind is not charity, the work does not become charity. Yet the works may appear alike outwardly. Works appear to men in external form, but to angels in

internal form; and to the Lord their quality is apparent from inmosts to outmosts." (No. 76.)

### MAN'S FINAL ABODE

We have said that a man chooses whether he will go to heaven or to hell; for in the other life he follows his inclinations. He also chooses his own place in heaven or hell; for in the other life there are innumerable societies. All who are in internal agreement, all who think alike and feel alike, dwell in one society. Happiness in this life depends largely upon the company we are in. If we have congenial friends, who think and feel the same as we do, we find happiness; while if we are living among those who are not congenial, we feel sad. In the other life we have the same interests that we had in this world, and it is therefore essential that we dwell with those who are entirely congenial.

### LIFE IN THE OTHER WORLD

In a pamphlet such as this, we cannot describe at length the character and nature of the other life. A full description can be found in the work on *Heaven and Hell*, by Emanuel Swedenborg. In that work are described a host of interesting things concerning the other life, among them a description of the different heavens; the government of heaven; the Sun of heaven', from which goes forth love as heat and truth as light; the garments and dwellings of the angels; little children in

heaven; the rich and the poor in heaven; the heathen in heaven; and the employment of the angels of heaven.

Here we will consider but two matters relating to heaven which are usually misunderstood. The New Church teaches that there were no angels created from the beginning, but all angels were once men; and that men and women are married in heaven.

## ANGELS AND DEVILS WERE ONCE MEN

That angels were once men, is evident from the words of the angel to John after he had fallen at the angel's feet to worship him; "And the angel said unto me, See thou do it not; I am thy fellow servant, and of thy brethren which keep the sayings of this book; worship God." (Rev. 22:8, 9.) The angel Gabriel and other angelic heralds were messengers sent from a society of those in heaven who had once dwelt on earth.

The Devil is not an original fallen angel, as is generally supposed, largely due to the reading of Milton's *Paradise Lost*. The Devil is a personification of all hell and evil. As we have already shown, it was customary in ancient times to speak of a church as if it were an individual man; so likewise it was customary to call hell "the devil." The devil which tempted the Lord was a messenger sent from hell as an ambassador to carry out its nefarious plans. The idea of a personal Devil is, to a great extent, Persian in its origin.

## MARRIAGE IN HEAVEN

The passage in the Gospels which reads "For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven," (Matt. 22: 30), has been taken to mean that in the other life all live as celibates. The idea of marriage, with those to whom the Lord was speaking, was so carnal and gross that they would not have understood, had the Lord revealed to them the truth about the heavenly marriage; He therefore permitted them to think that there was no marriage in heaven, until such time as men could rise in perception and purity, so that they might think of marriage as holy and primarily of the spirit. In other words, the Lord waited until He should come in spirit to explain His words, before revealing the actual conditions in the other world.

The word "marry," in the Greek, refers to the ceremony of marriage, and does not mean the state of being married. "To marry" referred to the man, and "being given in marriage" to the woman.

Marriage is often used in the Word in a spiritual idea, as where we read of the "marriage of the Lamb." And in the Prophets: "Thy land shall be married." Marriage, in this sense, is used to signify conjunction or union. On the plane of the spirit there is a great marriage which must take place during the life in the world; that is, the marriage of love and faith. Love and faith must be joined together as in a marriage, in order that a man may be prepared to enter the kingdom of God. This great marriage, which takes place in the mind of man, is symbolized or

represented by the marriage which takes place between a man and a woman.

If we consider the difference that exists between a man and a woman, we find that a man primarily loves to understand things. It is the man who leads in the search for truth, while a woman is primarily interested in the things of love and affection. Affection and not intellect take the most prominent part in the normal woman.

Man, on this account, represents faith, truth, or the understanding; while woman represents love, or affection. In every individual man and woman there must be the marriage of these two—"love" and "wisdom," or charity and faith. This is the marriage which does not take place in the other life. The marriage of faith and charity in the individual man must take place in this life, or it will never take place. This is the spiritual idea contained in the words of the Lord about marriage; but even in the literal sense they are true. A man and woman are not married in heaven; they are either married on earth, or if they are not married on earth, or are not suitably married, they are married in the world of spirits, on the threshold of heaven, before they make their entrance into their eternal abode.

That they are husband and wife in heaven, in a marriage which is primarily of the spirit, is on account of the nature of man. When we die we take with us all our loves, all our thoughts and affections. Men and women are not primarily such from their bodies, but from their spirits. As it is the spirit of a true man and woman which seeks union, therefore this union continues after death. What the Lord joins together he



joins for eternity. God does not unite things which are but temporary. "What therefore God has joined together, let not man put asunder."

## THE DIVINE PROVIDENCE

The question of Divine Providence troubles many people. Why is it that the evil often prosper, while the good suffer hard things? Is the Lord's hand weak? Or does He not do what is just?

We can best explain this mystery by quoting the words of Swedenborg from the work entitled the *New Jerusalem and its Heavenly Doctrine*: "They who think of the Divine Providence from worldly affairs conclude that its working is of a general nature, and that particulars depend upon human agencies. But such persons are unacquainted with the mysteries of heaven, because they form their conclusions under the influence of the love of self and the love of the world, and of their gross delights.

"Hence, when they see the wicked exalted to honor, and acquiring riches more than the good, and when they see success attending the devices of the evil, they say in their hearts that these things would not be so, if Providence were everywhere working, and if it reached to every detail of the life of man. They do not consider that the Divine Providence does not regard that which is fleeting and passes away, and which comes to an end with the life of man in this world, but that it regards that which remains to eternity, and which has no end.

"It may be said of that which has no end that it really is, but of that which has an end that relatively it does not exist. Let him who is able consider whether a hundred thousand years be anything compared to eternity, and he will see that they are nothing. What, then, are a few years of life in this world?

"Whosoever rightly considers the subject may know that worldly rank and riches are not real Divine blessings, bestowed on man by the Lord, although men call them so; for they pass away and also seduce many. But that eternal life and happiness are real blessings bestowed on man by the Lord, He Himself plainly teaches in these words:

"Provide for yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in heaven that faileth not, where no thief approacheth, nor moth corrupteth. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.' (Luke 12: 33, 34.)" (New Jerusalem and Its Heavenly Doctrine 269, 270.)

The Lord is always caring for man, preparing him for the greatest happiness, and developing him to the greatest extent possible. The hardships and trials that we go through, the sufferings of this life, are but as a moment in His sight. As a mother digs out a thorn from her child's finger, so the Lord permits us to undergo trials, always with the object of removing some evil, some fault. No man can know what is best; the Lord alone can judge whether happiness or sorrow will lead man to heaven the more readily. If a man chooses hell, then God so works that the evils into which he goes will be as mild as possible. Even in hell the Lord is always

working to keep those who are there from sinking into worse evils.

## THE SECOND COMING OF THE LORD AND THE LAST JUDGMENT

We have given a brief view of some of the essential teachings of the New Church; we will now close with a sketch of what is meant by the Second Coming of the Lord; the End of the Age, often called the end of the world; and the Last Judgment; and will then conclude with a few words about the New Church.

The end of the age and the coming of the Lord are described in Matthew, chapter twenty-four, in these words:

"Immediately after the tribulation of those days, the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heaven shall be shaken; and then shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven; and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory." (Verses 29, 30.)

We also read in the Gospels of the "day of judgment," and in John: "Now is the judgment of this world." (12:31.)

In Revelation we read: "Lo, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood; and the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind. And the heaven

departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places." (6:12-14.)

It is a general law of prophecy that the predictions are never fulfilled as men expect them to be fulfilled. When the Lord made His first coming, He did not come as the Jews expected Him. The prophecies were that He was to come as a king, as a hero and counsellor, and that when He came He would gather together the Children of Israel.

He did come as these, but not in the natural or literal sense. He fulfilled these prophecies spiritually. When asked by Pilate if He was the King of the Jews, the Lord answered by declaring, "My kingdom is not of this world." The enemy which He came to fight was the power of evil and hell. Because the Lord did not fulfill the prophecies literally the Jews would not believe in Him.

In the Old Testament, in Joel, there is a prophecy given of the coming of the Messiah which is very similar to the prophecy of the Second Coming given in Matthew:

"The earth shall quake before them; the heavens shall tremble: the sun and moon shall be dark, and the stars shall withdraw their shining." (Joel 2: 10.) Peter said, "For these are not drunken, as ye suppose; but this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel: 'And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh . . . The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and notable day of the Lord come.'" (Acts 2:15-20.)

Yet those who dwelt on earth were not aware of any great cosmic convulsion. That we are not to

take literally the things foretold in connection with the Second Coming, is manifest from the very nature of the prophecy; for it is obvious that the sun could not cease to give forth light, and that the stars, many of which are far larger than the earth, could not fall upon it, "as a fig tree casteth its untimely figs." That the prophecy of the Second Coming was not fulfilled literally, is evident from the prophecy itself. For the Lord said, "Verily I say unto you, this generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled." (Matthew 24: 34.) "There be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom." (Matt. 16:28.)

We have quoted certain passages which would seem to indicate a great destruction and commotion of natural forces; on the other hand, we have the prophecy that He would come as a thief: "Behold, I come as a thief." (Rev. 16:15.) And in Luke: "The kingdom of God cometh not with observation; neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you." (17: 20, 21.)

From what has been said it is obvious that these passages need explanation. When we interpret according to the spiritual sense all becomes clear. By "this generation,"—the generation of the disciples to whom the Lord spoke, in which all these things would be fulfilled, —is signified the generation or age of the first Christian Church, for this Church was represented by the Apostles of the Lord. This age or generation came to an end when the Lord made His Second Coming and established the New Church.

We have already mentioned that the Lord is in the sun of heaven, where He appears before the angels as He

appeared before Peter, James and John on the mountain when He was transfigured, shining as the light of the sun. The Lord gives the light and warmth of love to all in heaven, as the natural sun gives light and warmth to those who are on earth.

The Word in its internal sense does not treat of the things of this world, but of the things of heaven. When it is said that the "sun shall be darkened," it signifies that men will turn away from the love of God, so that they no longer receive the light and warmth of God's kingdom. As love to God is the great luminary which enlightens our minds, so faith is a lesser luminary which reflects the love of God as the moon reflects the light of the sun. By the "moon's becoming dark" is signified that men lose faith in the Lord and His Word.

The stars of heaven are like the knowledges of God and heaven, which shine as points of light in our spiritual minds. When men lose interest in these heavenly knowledges, and care merely for the sciences of this world, it is said, in Sacred Scripture, that the "stars of heaven fall to the earth."

By the "clouds of heaven" in which the Son of Man would come, is meant the literal or natural sense of the Word, much of which is written in "dark sayings of old." The truths of God are, as it were, hidden in a dark cloud until the time when the Lord explains them in His Second Coming. Then is revealed the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven. The clouds of the letter of the Word then shine with the light of truth, when the hidden things are brought forth to view; and the Son of Man appears in glory.

Now is fulfilled this prophecy. The Second Coming of the Lord Jesus Christ has taken place. He has come as He said, "not with observation," but quietly, "as a thief in the night." But how has He come?

How does the Lord come to man in His First Coming? He comes to us by means of the Gospels. We see Him through the eyes of His Apostles,—see Him as He walked on earth, teaching men and sharing their griefs and sorrows. Now He has revealed Himself again to those who have eyes to see. He has revealed Himself in the Writings of the New Church, written by Emanuel Swedenborg, whom He filled with His Holy Spirit, as He did the prophets of old. We see the Lord Jesus Christ in His Second Coming, as He reveals Himself in His glory as Ruler of heaven, through the eyes of Emanuel Swedenborg, whose eyes were opened to see Him in His Divine glory and majesty. All who search diligently in the Writings of the New Church can see the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of Man, in the clouds of heaven. That is, they can see the Lord in the Word of God, the internal sense of which is now revealed for the use of the New Church. The Word which "became flesh" is now seen once more in glory.

The Last Judgment, which was predicted in connection with the Second Coming, does not take place on this earth; but it took place in the spiritual world during the time that Swedenborg had his spiritual eyes opened. Swedenborg witnessed the great overturning and destruction in the other world, which was prophesied concerning the Judgment.

That God has no reason for destroying the visible heavens and the world on which we dwell is obvious. There is nothing wrong with the earth itself,—no reason for its destruction. Land and earth in the Word are very frequently used to signify the Church. By the "new earth," which is to take the place of the former earth, is meant a New Church which God will establish to take the place of the former Christian Church, as at His first coming He established the Christian Church to take the place of the Jewish Church.

In order to understand what is meant by the heavens "rolling up as a scroll," and a new heaven taking its place, we must have some knowledge of the other world. After death, when everything is normal, men are judged soon after their arrival in the spiritual world, and go to their final abodes; but at the end of the Church, when many of the leaders of thought teach what is false, and do not lead the life of heaven, there is a great influx of evil men into the other world. The world of spirits comes into confusion, and congestion takes place. The evil took advantage of this confusion to establish false heavens for themselves; and for a while they had the power to keep the good in bondage. While the Lord was on earth He executed a great judgment on these false heavens. He drove out the evil, and established the good in their place. The same thing took place during the time that Swedenborg had his spiritual eyes opened. Swedenborg actually saw mountains overturned, as it were, and the islands fleeing away. He witnessed the great Last Judgment, in which the good who had been held in bondage



appeared to come from below, from what appeared like caves or sepulchers, and were established in their proper heaven.

## THE FIVE CHURCHES

In the past there have been four great Churches on earth, one following the other, and now is established the fifth,—the New Church. The first great Church, which we call the Most Ancient Church, is represented in the Word by "Adam." The second great Church, which we call the Ancient Church, was represented by "Noah." The third great Church was the Israel-itish or Jewish Church. The fourth great Church in this series is the Christian Church, which the Lord established while He dwelt on earth. And the fifth great Church is the New Church,—the Church of the New Jerusalem, established by the Lord at the time of His Second Coming. This Church is still in its infancy. Now is fulfilled the prophecy of Daniel: "I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of Man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought Him near before Him. And there was given Him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom that all people, nations and languages, should serve him: His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom that which shall not be destroyed." (7: 13, 14.)

God has always revealed Truth suitable to the age in which men are. In the infancy and youth of the race, Divine Revelation was necessarily of a

nature suitable to the peoples of those times. The race has now come to manhood; and the Lord has therefore revealed rational truth adapted to the adult rational mind. This last Revelation of His Word to man is therefore the final and crowning Revelation of Himself. In so far as men learn the truths of the New Church, and live according to its Divine Doctrine, the prophecy of John is fulfilled: "I John saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And He that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new; and He said unto me, Write, for these words are true and faithful." (Revelation 21:2.)

With those who truly accept the Lord in His Second Coming, everything of the mind and spirit is indeed made new. But this newness must not only be a matter of faith, but also a matter of life and love. Of those who are of the Church, and yet do not obey the commandments of God, Jeremiah writes: "Stand in the gate of the house of Jehovah, and proclaim there this word: Thus saith Jehovah of Hosts, the God of Israel: Render good your ways and your works; trust ye not upon the words of a lie, saying, The temple of Jehovah, the temple of Jehovah, the temple of Jehovah is here (that is, the Church). Will ye steal, kill, commit adultery, and swear falsely, and after that come and stand before Me in this house, whereon my name is called, and say we are delivered, whilst ye do all these abominations? Is not this house become a den of robbers? Behold, even I have seen it, saith the Lord." (Jeremiah 7:2-111.)

## THE SACRAMENTS

Without knowledge of correspondences it is impossible to realize the importance or meaning of Baptism and the Holy Supper.

Washing is for the sake of cleansing. Ordinary washing is for the cleansing of the body; baptism is for the cleansing of the spirit. Not that baptism actually cleanses the spirit; for only the actual removal of evil can accomplish this end. The washing of baptism represents this purification from evil.

There are two things which nourish the body,—food and drink. There are likewise two things which nourish the spirit,—good and truth. Food is to the body what good or love is to the spirit, while drink is to the body what truth or wisdom is to the spirit. Truth not only aids in the nourishment of the spirit, but also cleanses the spirit, when the man who knows it orders his life according to it. Baptism with water therefore stands for a sign or representation of regeneration—the regeneration that results from the removal of evil by obedience to the commandments of God.

Baptism does not in itself accomplish these ends, but is a symbol of them. Wherefore we read in *The New Jerusalem and its Heavenly Doctrine*: "As baptism is for a sign and memorial of these things, therefore man may be baptized as an infant, and if not then, he may be baptized as an adult. Let those, therefore, who are baptized, know that baptism itself gives neither faith nor salvation, but it testifies that they may receive faith, and be saved, if they are regenerated." (Nos. 206, 207.)

What use, then, does baptism perform? The answer given in the *True Christian Religion* is as follows: "The first use of baptism is introduction into the Christian Church, and at the same time insertion among Christians in the spiritual world. In the heavens, infants are introduced by baptism into the Christian heaven, and angels are assigned by the Lord to take care of them." (No. 677.)

In order to understand this passage it must be known that while a man is living in this world he is at the same time living in the spiritual world as to his spirit, although unaware of his spiritual associations. Whatever a man does affects the angels or evil spirits who are with him. The influence of Baptism and the Holy Supper is largely due to the relation of the two worlds, to the effect which the acts of men have in attracting angels. That a man has guardian angels, and that he is tempted by devils, has been known since ancient times, and it is only in the present age of skepticism, materialism, and agnosticism, that this presence has been denied.

When a man eats the bread of the Holy Supper, the angels who are with him think of the Lord's Love, which feeds and builds up his spirit. When he drinks the wine, the angels think of the Divine Truth from God which refreshes the soul and enlightens the understanding. By this means God is brought more closely present and conjoined to the man who loves God and keeps His commandments. With those who are regenerating, what is represented in the Holy Supper is actually fulfilled in the partaking of it. (See *True Christian Religion*, no. 728.)

## CONCLUSION

Now are fulfilled the words of the prophet Zechariah: "There shall be one day which is known to Jehovah, not day, nor night, but about the time of evening it shall be light. It shall come to pass in that day that living waters shall go forth from Jerusalem. And Jehovah shall be King over all the earth; in that day shall Jehovah be one, and His name one." (Zachariah I4 7-9.)

"And the Spirit and the Bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." (Rev. 22:17.)

The Lord Jesus Christ has come in glory to re-establish His Church. Let not Christians reject their Lord and Master, who has come in spirit and in truth, as the Jews rejected their God when He visited them.

The Lord said: "Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come." (Matthew 24:42.)

And the New Testament closes with these words: "He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen." (Revelation 2: 20, 21.)

## Hebrew, Greek and Latin

"Pilate wrote a title and put it on the cross. And the writing was JESUS OF NAZARETH—THE KING OF THE JEWS. And it was written in Hebrew, Greek and Latin." (John 19:19, 20).

As in God there is a trinity, so likewise in the Word of God there is a trinity. This trinity consists of the three Testaments of the Word of God, written in three languages as was the superscription over the cross—Hebrew, Greek and Latin.

The Old Testament is written in Hebrew, the New Testament in Greek and the Third Testament, which is the Writings of Emanuel Swedenborg, in which the Lord has made His Second Coming, in Latin.

When the Lord was on earth we read that "He expounded in all the scriptures the things concerning Himself." (Luke 24:27).

But while the Lord, as to certain things, unfolded the Old Testament, still, the New Testament in which we find the Lord's words is also covered with the veil of a letter.

The Lord in His Second Coming has again opened the internal sense of the Old and New Testament in the Third Testament, that is, in the Writings of Emanuel Swedenborg. Yet His Third Testament is again veiled with a letter, for we read, "For upon all glory shall be a covering." (Isaiah 4:5).

On the basis of the Three Testaments of the Word of the Lord, the Lord's Holy Spirit will eternally open the Scriptures more and more, for the Word of God contains Infinite Truths which can be opened more and more to eternity.

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