

A black and white portrait of a man with a large, curly wig, wearing a dark coat with a white collar. He is holding a book or document in his hands. The text on the book is partially legible and appears to be Latin or Greek, including words like 'APOCALYPTIS', 'DECELI', 'Delegatus', 'Sua', 'PDE', and 'Sunt'.

JANUARY 15, 1963

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ESSENTIAL FAITH OF THE NEW CHURCH

There is one God, and He is the
Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Saving faith is to believe in Him and
keep the Commandments of His Word.

The Word is Divine and contains a
spiritual or inner meaning which
reveals the way of regeneration.

Evil should be shunned as sin against
God.

Human life is unbroken and con-
tinuous, and the world of the spirit is
real and near.

E D I T O R I A L

*The following is one of a series being prepared by the Central Feature News, Inc.,
on the ecumenical movement, and being supplied to 800 editors of local news
media throughout the country.*

Towards One Church

FOR NEARLY 2,000 years the Christian Church has been bitterly divided
against itself. Only in the last decade have the leaders finally come to-
gether to discuss their common faith rather than their rigid differences.

Over 200 years ago Emanuel Swedenborg was deeply disturbed at the
sectarian feuding of his own day, when in his belief the warring Christian sects
could share a common, fundamental credo in the three essentials of the Church:
"the acknowledgment of the Divine of the Lord, the acknowledgment of the
holiness of the Word; and the life which is called Charity." His clear under-
standing of the oneness of Christian aims foreshadowed the same general
purpose as the leaders of the current ecumenical movement. Son of the King's
chaplain, he was in the bosom of the Lutheran Church. But in his bosom was a
bigger church, one which encompassed the world—that is, the world as it was
known in the 18th century. Although he remained a Lutheran he eventually
found himself unable to accept the full doctrine of the Church and at the age of
59 declined the post of Councilor of Mines in order to devote all of his thoughts
and energies to being "The Servant of Christ."

He wrote of his vision of renewed Christianity, and believed that in it lay
the salvation of the world. He felt that man is as much a part of the spiritual
world as he is of the physical. His good standing in court and his obvious
disinclination to act the part of demagogue or prophet, enabled him to work
undisturbed. Like other men in advance of their time his work was often
ridiculed. The comment of contemporaries does not always convey the true
significance of a man, and today his works are widely studied by ecclesiastical
and lay scholars alike. The Swedenborg Foundation a New York publishing
body independent of any church organization has been kept busy for well over
100 years, supplying Swedenborg's Writings to students of all faiths throughout
the world.

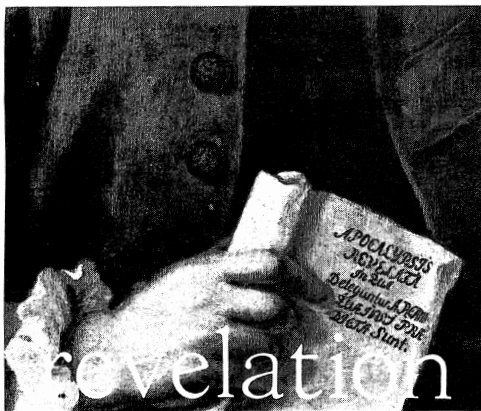
Swedenborg's main concern was for the Christian Church, although he was
not unfamiliar with the non-Christian religions of the East. The Church of
the Lord is spread over all the globe "... and all those are in it who have lived
in good of charity according to their religion." Today these words embrace
far broader horizons than Swedenborg originally envisaged.

With the end of colonialism came the decline of the Christian missionary.
Many converts remain confirmed Christians but many revert to the beliefs
of their forefathers. All four of the great religions offer spiritual fulfillment.
Where then is the meeting point? For Mohamedans there is a single, all power-
ful God who controls the destiny of every human event; the Jews recognize one
omnipotent God and are still awaiting the Messiah's coming; Christians believe
in the same omnipotent God, but acknowledge that Jesus Christ is the Godhead
revealed; even Buddhism—belief in human perfection only attainable through
supplication and devotion—expresses its belief in a single ideal.

Where then is the dividing line? Independence has given these religions room
to expand, to have their voices heard not just in the wilderness but in the cities
of the West too. But the voices of all religions must be heard by the spirit
within; to quote again from Swedenborg: "The church is within man and not
without him; and every man is a church in whom the Lord is present in the good
of love and faith."

Can there be division in unity? In seeking religious unity thoughtful leaders
realize that progress will be impeded according to the degree of dogmatic
insistence on doctrines, and to surmount that obstacle man's freedom of
thought must be respected and preserved. If a new organization is to become
the "Crown of Churches" it must be built on the foundation of the three
essentials as distilled by Swedenborg, and—recognizing the soundness of his
aphorism "Doctrines divide but Charity unites"—allow for doctrinal divisions
which, as he puts it, "may be compared with so many jewels in the King's
Crown."

At a time when Church leaders are getting together, Christian theologians
are also realizing more clearly than ever that there are fundamental similar-
ities among the world's other great religions. Perhaps it is their shared belief
that in the eternal struggle for unattainable perfection lies man's fulfillment and
ennoblement.



IN SWEDENBORG

by William F. Wunsch

I

REVELATION MAY have ceased to have reality in many quarters of Christendom, and the Scriptures have become less than a testimony to revelation, and this may be true of many ministers. The Christian theologian, however, is in more earnest about the Bible, which gives him his subjects, and about revelation in general. He is clear that there is no religion which is not the product, directly or indirectly, of revelation, and that Christianity is plainly the product of revelation. As seriously as Swedenborg, he is sure that otherwise we would not know of God, of a higher world, of human rebirth and destiny, of a goodness devoid of self-interest, of faith, of a peace that passes all understanding. It is part of our secularism which regards religion as the product of a culture and therefore different in one culture and another. Meant of the forms that religion takes, this is true; it is obviously true of conventional religion. So it is of what can be called additives—rituals, ikons, statuary, superstitions, vestments, church architecture. These and other externalities can be called additives, for they do arouse and add to the force of religious feeling and perhaps comprehension. But when what constitutes the essence of religion is meant—acknowledgment of God, awareness of life eternal, responsibility to conscientious obligations, the wise life avoiding evils, human rebirth—these spiritual realities and experiences are not produced by a culture. It is a constant struggle to lodge them in a culture and make this what it could be. What a culture could be is a revelation. For the Christian the Scriptures, Old Testament and New, have disclosed the spiritual realities that have been mentioned and countless more. Christianity is to be learned from the Christ, in whom God was manifested, and who spoke as never man did of God, of human needs and possibilities, of a destiny surmounting this life, of the redemption of the world, of the endless hidden realities in life. So the Christian theologian defines revelation to be the disclosure by God of Himself and of divine things. At the full, revelation is some form of encounter with God.

One would think that any message which does this is revelation. Criteria are sometimes proposed and attempted, however, of the truth or validity of a purported

revelation. The tests applied to Scripture, like coherence, which would fall on Scripture as a whole and require no substantial contradiction anywhere in it, and tests which would fall on parts of Scripture, as that a prediction is true if it finds fulfillment, both turn out to be inadequate or to fall short. Fulfillment still awaits some predictions, notably that by Isaiah and Micah of international peace. As for the more general test of coherence, many of the books of the Bible, in either Testament, confront one with a God of anger and war, and others with a God of love. So far do tests fail that readers, overquick in reaction, ask why God did not speak more plainly. They want to be able to say, indeed be forced to say, "This is without question God's Word." They prefer, or think they would, a flat and unevadable fact to a truth to be met freely in a life-changing faith. Revelation does not need criteria tried on it, and the Christian theologian does not lean on them. It is his conviction that revelation achieves its reception itself. The Bible has made its way bringing Christianity from Asia across Europe and on into the Western hemisphere by the power inherent in it—all the power really in any publication or preachment or anyone's advocacy—molding civilization after civilization, and elevating one national culture after another.

Let us note another preliminary consideration. One is slower to hail revelation if one thinks it is rare; readier to welcome it when one appreciates how widely God has sought to make himself known. The concept of revelation is to be found in practically every religion—Buddhism, a student may or may not conclude, is the exception. God is not thought to be accessible to human minds otherwise. A veil over Him, over a further life and over spiritual realities generally, has to be parted. Swedenborg recites a history of revelation, at first in prehistoric times private revelation to the individual person, then public in an ancient Word not extant now, public again in the appearance of the Old Testament in the course of eight or more centuries, then again in the far more quickly assembled New Testament. The Word in these Testaments Swedenborg calls "the crown of revelations"—that word is "revelations," plural. Swedenborg said

in prose what Samuel Longfellow wrote in verse:

Light of ages and of nations, every race and every time
Has received Thine inspirations, glimpses of Thy truth sublime . . .
While Thine inward revelations told Thy saints their prayers were heard,
Prophets to the guilty nations spoke Thine everlasting Word.
Lord, that Word abideth ever; revelation is not sealed;
Answering now to our endeavor, truth and right are still revealed.

There is a dogma and it can be called a conviction that public revelation is sealed and ended with the last Apostle. Private revelation out of the Scriptures to a devout reader has continued, of course. One can agree that such a revelation as that in the Bible, done in the symbolic language of correspondences, cannot be repeated, indeed because of the amplitude of such utterance need not be. But cannot a further revelation, public, too, or meant for all, spring out of that Word, which is the crown of revelations, and tell us what more is in it than we have thought?

Let us have one more consideration before us preliminary to our specific topic. First a question: can Christianity, the product of revelation, undergo renewal with redeeming power except by revelation? Are men who stand in need of redemption going to be the source of such renewal? Or is the risen and abiding Christ to be looked to, who said, "Behold, I make all things new," among these surely the thinking and life of His following? The Book of the Bible in which that promise is made, the Book of Revelation, looks to the future; its scene is partly on earth (the Roman world) and partly the other world; its story the coming of the Lord and the passing of Christianity from its first era into a second, symbolized by old and new heaven and earth. All is signified by the Lord's angel to His servant John in visions. Is not the Christian theologian to recognize this manner of revelation of and by the Lord Jesus Christ, the world of the spirit and angelic mediation involved in it, a servant from among men counted upon, the Lord seen in vision?

With these introductory remarks on revelation and on Scripture we turn to the subject of revelation in Swedenborg. I take the subject up under two heads. First, how did the revelation which Swedenborg purports to make come to him, or, if it is tenable to speak so, how did he make his way to it? Second, how did he deliver in the Theological Works what was revealed to him?

A. Revelation to Swedenborg.

First, then, his path to what was to be revealed to him. That path was not single; it had two lanes. One ran through his other-world experience, and the other through his study and exploration of Scripture. He traveled these lanes alternately, the one as his acquaintance with the life beyond progressed, the other as in this world he explored the Scriptures and became acquainted

with new depths in them. The two effects were intimately associated, and the path was one path. In half an hour one cannot describe the whole path; I am choosing the lane that traverses the other-world experience, and of it can hope to note only salient steps and aspects.

Before his feet are firmly directed into that lane, two astounding experiences befall Swedenborg—a first and a second manifestation of Christ to him, the first in Delft at Eastertime, 1744, the second in London, April, 1745. These manifestations have a character and status of their own. Recall that it is the unconditional insight and position of the Theological Works that the Lord in Person is constantly encompassed by the sun of the spiritual world, the fire of infinite love, the heat of which not the highest angels can endure except at a great distance. Yet in each of these manifestations it is said that the Lord appeared in Person. In the first Swedenborg lay in Christ's bosom and saw Him face to face. In the second the Lord said He was the Creator and Redeemer. In the first the awestruck Swedenborg found words of humble address and of prayer put in his mouth by the Lord, and was bidden, "Then do." In the second he learned what he was to do—disclose the spiritual sense of the Word. In the first he was thrown to the floor. The first also left him with a question—could this really be Christ?—a question out of which he brought himself slowly, though he felt it would be sinful to doubt it. Was not each manifestation effected through an angel overwhelmed by the mission he was sent on, and as filled with the Spirit of the Lord and with the Lord's purpose for Swedenborg that he had no feeling that he was not the Lord? The impact was the same, so great that no room was left for reflection on how the manifestation occurred. What had happened was all that Swedenborg knew—Christ had appeared to him and laid a mission on him. It was a call and a vision like Isaiah's, but with none of the grandeur of circumstances of the prophet's vision, and like John's in *Revelation*, when he beheld one like the Son of Man in a circle of lamps. The humble and even distressing surroundings in which Swedenborg recorded the manifestations to him attest their reality. Much later Swedenborg wrote, "Not the highest angels see the Lord's face" (*Apocalypse Explained*, n. 412(16)). "In Person the Lord is always encompassed by the sun above heaven." "When the Lord manifests Himself in Person to the angels He does so as a man, sometimes in the sun, sometimes outside it" (*Divine Love and Wisdom*, n. 97). "The Lord has been seen also by me outside the sun in an angel's form" (*Heaven and Hell*, n. 121). The unique and urgent need, the extraordinary mission and the overpowering employment of angelic agency explain the violence of the first manifestation and some other aspects of both manifestations. Neither manifestation is of the order of the other-world experience when sight and hearing were fully established there, as they came to be, Swedenborg says, following the second manifestation.

It is the story of what Swedenborg learns through opened sight and hearing in his other-world experience

of which some account is to be given. That story is jotted down animatedly in MSS not published by the Seer—the *Adversaria* (now entitled *The Word Explained* and his *Spiritual Diary*). Fragmentary as the memoranda are, they flash with life, express his wonderment, are filled with questions. Swedenborg was more concerned than anyone else could be whether what he was experiencing was reality or delusion. "I once perceived, after some months during which I had spoken with spirits, that if I had been remitted into my original state, I could have fallen into the opinion that they had been phantasies" (*Spiritual Diary*, n. 2951). This same number glances back further than the several months at the very gradual coming of the world of the spirit to his consciousness—the play of a light not of this world on his mind, dreams with meaning for what he was writing, darts of flame indicating that what he was writing was true. "The kingdom of heaven" (so he first spoke of the supernatural realm) was seen "in an image" by him, he wrote elsewhere (Index Biblicus). The heavenly life, we may recall, was also seen by John in Patmos "in an image," namely, as a city and as a bride. A feeling came that unseen persons approached him, tarried, and left. One day to his astonishment he was addressed by a spirit to whom his thoughts were known (*Spiritual Diary*, n. 4390). Finally came awareness of a throng of human beings to whom he refers anonymously as "spirits and angels," just as we find ourselves among many unknown to us on the streets, in stores, and elsewhere. He comes upon acquaintances and friends, and can make the acquaintance of any known to him from history.

The close connection of the spiritual world with ours becomes inescapable. This extends to influence from beyond on our volitional and mental life. Swedenborg had believed that his thoughts and volitions were his, as we all do, and arose in him. But the life in us, of heart and mind, issues first of all out of Infinite Being, and is brought to us across the world of the spirit. The normal transmission leaves us free to fashion our reaction, but an abnormal and enslaving transmission would make it utterly plain that the transmission of life is fact. Some spirits were allowed such a complete grip on Swedenborg's thought that they controlled his hand as he wrote. Such passages in the MSS are written with vehemence and with slashing, slanted strokes, unlike Swedenborg's normal handwriting. "Nay, I have also written whole pages, and the spirits did not dictate the words, but altogether led my hand, and thus themselves did the writing" (*Adversaria*, n. 1150). It was the extreme evidence to him of the influx of the spiritual world into this world. Much later he wrote: "When it was granted me by the Lord to speak with spirits and angels, the foregoing arcanum was at once disclosed to me. For I was told from heaven that like others I believed that I thought and willed from myself, when in fact nothing was from myself, but if it was good it was from the Lord, and if evil from hell" (*Divine Providence*, n. 290).

I turn to another extreme and one of a very different kind—Swedenborg's other-world experience was not lim-

ited to his personal capabilities, but was commensurate with his mission. The inducing on him of states foreign to him is an illustration and evidence of this. He was to tell of as many states of the human spirit as possible. "It has been granted me to feel the nature and also the strength of the enjoyment of ruling from the love of self. I was let into it that I might know. It was such as to exceed all worldly enjoyments. It was an enjoyment of the whole mind from its inmosts to its outmosts, but felt in the body only as pleasure and gratification, making the chest swell. It was also granted me to perceive that from this enjoyment as from their fountainhead there issued the enjoyments of evils of every kind" (*Divine Providence*, n. 215(9)). Again, he not only observed the state of frustration and misery in hell, but was let into it and suffered it. He had his own experiences with attacks from infernal sources, but again a state of mis-conceived life alien to him was induced on him to learn of it.

Commensurate with his mission was Swedenborg's seemingly unlimited observation of the phenomena and life of the world of the spirit. This enlarged and progressive observation was what Swedenborg referred to when he told Robsahm that after the London vision "the world of spirits, hell and heaven were opened to me with full conviction." The accumulation began of the mass of material that was to go, first into the interchapter pages of the *Arcana*, then gathered up into the book *Heaven and Hell*. From both what he was told and from what he saw, the far-flung disposition of the spiritual world yielded to description—its grand expanses in a trine of heavens, its unhappy reaches in a trine of infernal regions, its vast entry hall, in itself a world and a state of clarifying human life. The objective spiritual world lay clearer to the Seer than our world (*Arcana Coelestia*, n. 974(4), for its light is more revealing. Landscapes, hills, trees, gardens, houses, schools, libraries, become familiar surroundings. This was the objective spiritual world, as it comes to the senses of these living in it, and as it came to Swedenborg's spirit's sight. All this objective world, he quickly learned, is the appearance to sensation of deeper, subjective reality, a house of the inhabitant's character and mode of life, the great expanse of any heaven of a certain measure of spiritual attainment.

This relation of the objective (present to sight) to deeper reality (present to insight) is eminently true, Swedenborg found, of the most commanding of all objects there, the sun. Of it he says that the creation of the universe started with it, and was completed with the subsidiary aid of a sun in the world of nature. For the sun of the spiritual world is the fiery orb of the Lord's infinite love for mankind and for all His creation. How decidedly that sun, as an object, is the appearance to sense of God's creative love, becomes plain from the fact that not all even in heaven behold it; only a responding love, of the Lord specifically, enables an angel to do so. The objectification of God's infinite love in the mighty

Please turn to page 26

Recognition of Swedenborg's 274th birthday was made in a radio interview January 29, 1962, with the Swedish Ambassador, the Honorable Gunnar Jarring, over W R C (National Broadcasting Company), Washington, D. C. The full text of the interview with the Swedish Ambassador follows. This was re-broadcast by the Voice of America.

Radio Interview with Ambassador Jarring

Introduction by Mrs. Cavin (of the Patty Cavin Show, "Capitol By-Lines")

TODAY JANUARY 29, 1962, marks the 274th anniversary of the birth of Emanuel Swedenborg, the great Swedish 18th century scientist and philosopher. I understand that the day has been celebrated by the placing of an aircraft model, designed by Swedenborg, in the Smithsonian Institution National Museum here in Washington. The model is a gift from the Swedenborg Foundation of New York City. I am very much pleased to have with us today the Swedish Ambassador, the Honorable Gunnar Jarring, who has promised to tell us a little about his famous compatriot.

Ambassador Jarring, the name of Swedenborg surely sounds like a good Swedish name; it could have been thought up by a modern sociologist as a brand name for the average Swedish citizen.

Ambassador Jarring

Well, Mrs. Cavin, as you have already suggested yourself, despite his name there is nothing that is average about Emanuel Swedenborg. He was rather one of those universal geniuses, who turn up perhaps once in a century, who manage to grasp wide areas of human knowledge and who, through their visionary thinking, stake out a road which is gradually built by later generations.

He was born in Stockholm on January 29, 1688, exactly 274 years ago today. He was the son of Jesper Swedborg, Bishop of Skara, and writer of some of the best loved Swedish hymns. Young Emanuel graduated from the University of Upsala at the age of 21 and went off on one of the grand tours of Europe which at that time was an indispensable part of a young man's education. He discussed science with the best scholars in England, Holland and other European countries and returned to his native Sweden in 1715 to start a brilliant scientific career. He took the name of Swedenborg when the family was ennobled in 1719. This also made it possible for Emanuel to play a political role as a member of the upper house of the Swedish parliament.

Mrs. Cavin

One would think that the world of science was a rather small world in those days and that it would have been easier for one man to master wide areas of knowledge, unlike today, when a scientist is a man who knows more and more about an even narrower field of knowledge.

Ambassador Jarring

That is right, of course. But it was indeed an era when science went forward by leaps and bounds. The Age of

Reason had begun to sweep away the old metaphysical ideas about our world and science thrived in the new freedom. Although Swedenborg's discoveries, inventions and ideas may not have reached the same level of lucid perfection as those of his great contemporary, Isaac Newton, one is stunned at the versatility of his creative mind. He spoke six languages fluently. He read Hebrew and Greek and most of his books were written in Latin. I have seen a list made up by modern scientists of those items in Swedenborg's scientific production which can be considered as new and original thinking, forecasting much later development. The list is almost fantastic. His discoveries founded the science of crystallography. He partially anticipated the Einstein doctrine of energy. He constructed the first mercurial air pump. He discovered the functions of the motor areas of the brain and put forward a theory of the function of the ductless glands. The circulation and uses of the spinal fluid was another of his medical discoveries. He had a hypothesis on the nature of the galaxies which very much pointed forward. He carried on extensive studies on the nature of magnetism. He founded the sciences of geology and metallurgy in Sweden and he wrote the first book on algebra in Swedish. He also was an economist. The modern method of amortizing mortgages along with the payment of interest, which plays such an enormous role in today's housing market, was introduced in Sweden by legislation sponsored by Swedenborg almost two centuries before the system was adopted in this country.

His inventions in different technical fields can be counted in the hundreds. Most of them were never put to test, though, as he disliked experimental work, in spite of the fact that he was himself skilled in many trades, like book-binding, clock-making, engraving and lens-grinding. I have already mentioned his air pump. He made improvements in the primitive hearing aids of the day—the ear trumpets. He made a musical machine, forerunner of our phonograph. He built an experimental tank for testing ship models, similar to those which are still in use. He reflected on the possibility of a submarine, designed a machine gun and marketed a usable fire extinguisher. And he designed a glider-type aeroplane, which was the reason that brought us here today.

Mrs. Cavin

Will it fly, Mr. Ambassador? Would you care for the job of a test pilot?

Ambassador Jarring

Well, I am not too sure about that, and I doubt that Swedenborg himself considered his "Machine to fly in the air", as he called it, to be among his most important

inventions, or that it could become of any particular blessing to humanity. Still, it has been called the "first rational design for a flying machine of the airplane type" by such a distinguished authority as the Royal Aeronautical Society in London.

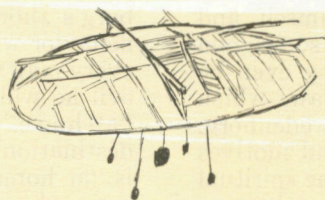
Mrs. Cavin

Thank you, Mr. Ambassador. I think you have given us a picture of a most unusual man. I think, though, that to most Americans, Swedenborg is known as a religious teacher, as the founder of one of our innumerable church groupings.

Ambassador Jarring

Well, this is also true, and this is the other and no less fascinating aspect of the man Swedenborg. He was a true child of the Age of Reason. "The world is nothing but a machine", he wrote in his early years; the soul,

human life and character, are nothing but tremulations in the body's material particles. So he set out searching for the soul by studying the mechanism of the human body. From his fifty seventh year to his death at eighty-four he carried on this search, moving with every year farther away from the clearcut rationalism of his early years, into the mystic depths of the spiritual life. His religious works, which cover more than 16,000 pages, have been translated into more than twenty languages, including the Braille alphabet for the blind, which opened the world of Swedenborg, for instance, to people like Helen Keller. He has between five and six thousand followers in this country who gather to study his teachings and ideas in some fifty churches all over the country, of which the famous Wayfarer's Chapel in Portuguese Bend, California, built by Frank Lloyd Wright, is the best known.



The Anatomy of Guilt and Forgiveness As seen by Swedenborg

by John Afman

AN UNDERSTANDING of Swedenborg's thought on guilt and forgiveness is immediately difficult because to some extent his language and concepts are out of the ordinary. The physical words as well as the doctrines they convey force the reader to slow down a pace and read material over again. This is both to be praised and regretted—praised because seminarians of all people need to be startled out of linguistic and doctrinal ruts in order to stay healthy, and regretted because the temptation to spare oneself all the effort is too attractive.

In yielding to the temptation one is apt to fall into one of two errors: either he will infer that because the material is strange, the writer is probably unorthodox at every major point of doctrine, or he will assume that Swedenborg actually meant to be orthodox and simply used different words. Either conclusion is dangerous. Fortunately for all men, God's truth is not necessarily bound to appear only in orthodox terminology or with a Lutheran or Calvinistic accent. For that reason a study of Swedenborg is an adventure and a most profitable one. But one must also be critical of the man in the best and wisest sense of that term. Through such a sympathetic but critical approach the reader will discover not a little confusion as to Swedenborg's proximity to orthodoxy. The following, therefore, must necessarily reflect this confusion, but hopefully not to the obscuring of his point.

The first half of our topic raises a problem which we can use as a place of beginning. Swedenborg does not **speak openly of guilt**, that is, he does not use the word or offer a Luther-like barrage of what an *experience* of guilt feels like in one's very soul. Instead he is more concerned

with a description of man's sinful state, with that about which man should feel guilty, more with the nature of sin than with the anatomy of guilt as a conscious fact or experience. In fact, he is very intent on claiming that the sinful man is generally immune to feeling guilt because his love of "the infernal", another name for inordinate desire, prevents him from seeing and desiring righteousness as God sees it. When he is ruled by the enjoyment of an evil love, as Swedenborg calls it, he cannot even reason clearly about good and truth, much less desire them.

The writer's emphasis is on what a man *loves*, since "the life of man is his love". A sinner is one who *enjoys* sin, not simply one who sins. And when the will desires a certain thing, the mind generally supports it and offers concrete ways in which it can become the force which rules one's life to the exclusion of other loyalties or loves. There will be times when the mind will assume a form of independence and dwell on heavenly truth and love, but when the *will* is absorbed with sin, the mind can do no more than consider the truth at a distance. The disease of sinful desire spreads throughout the whole man and is at its deceptive best when man assumes he can merely know the truth and consider divine love but never do anything about it in the seat of his affections. As long as he *loves* the evil, he will discover himself increasingly enslaved by "myriads of affections" which will entangle his inner man in an unconscious slavery.

"He will lead himself more and more deeply into evil for the reason, essentially, that as he wills and commits evil, he enters more and more interiorly and also more and more deeply into infernal societies. Hence the

enjoyment of evil increases, too, and occupies his thoughts until he feels nothing more agreeable. One who has entered more interiorly and deeply into infernal societies becomes like one bound by chains. So long as he lives in the world, he does not feel the chains; they seem to be made of soft wool or smooth silken threads. He loves them, for they titillate; but after death, from being soft, these chains become hard, and from being pleasant become galling."¹

While a man lives, he does not feel the chains. Sin perverts his thinking so that sin is not sin, but goodness. Good is not good, but evil. Self-love is not the chief of all transgressions, the corrupt fountain of all unrighteousness, but rather the natural course for all men. Hence man feels *no guilt!* Instead of deploring one's self before God's holy throne, the sinner presumes to dominate God, to extend the love for ownership inherent in self-love beyond everything on earth and into heaven itself, yea, even to the throne and person of God!²

Man was created to receive and embody divine love and wisdom emanated from God's very nature through the sun in the initial creation. But man chooses by means of his God-given free will to love himself and embody falsehood. He will most likely display some good of an outward nature in his civic life and may even be morally upright in accordance with moral law, which is a step higher than merely civic law for Swedenborg. But his self-love will so infest his thoughts and motives that he will never be able of himself to obey the spiritual law, the highest law of all, the law of pure righteousness in accordance with God's own love and wisdom. And without genuine spiritual good man is neither a moral man nor a civic man.³ What looks like goodness is simply respectable behavior more or less demanded by society. It is a product of the "external man" in Swedenborg's terminology, the man of appearance and activity. The "internal man", however, is the core of man's true nature, the man of motives and affections. Behind the appearance of outward morality lurk the sinful impulses inherited from the past as an overpowering tendency toward sin, and developed in one's own life-time in the exercise of free will. For instance, a man may refrain from physically murdering a fellow man, but may harbor enmity, hatred and revenge toward him, all of which "breathe murder, for murder lies hidden in them, like fire in wood underneath the ashes."

According to Swedenborg, therefore the sinner should feel guilt, but does not because of the self-deceptive power in self-love which obscures and dulls his sense of sin. He refuses to call sin sin and to face it squarely. If he did, he would be accusing himself; his love of self would be the main target and no man will freely operate upon himself in this way.

Anything less than this, however, is not enough, says Swedenborg. Over and over again he demands that sin be named and exposed for what it really is, and the sinner for what he really is—namely, a self in rebellion against its Creator. Sin is to be hated and abandoned, moreover,

not because it injures self-interests, but because of its spiritual nature as an act which offends God's love and wisdom in one's life. For instance, a man must abstain from adultery and whoredom, not from the fear of civil punishment or loss of reputation or the possibility of disease or the anger of his wife, but because God has condemned it as a sin against his own divine nature of pure love and truth which man should reflect in his inmost life. The illegitimate reasons for hating sin grow out of the civic and moral laws, but only the "spiritual law" entails the proper reason since only the spiritual law is completely engrossed in the all-righteous nature of God himself. The civic and moral laws emanate from the spiritual but do not go deeply enough into what the sinner really is in the inner man.

The final judgment of each soul will consist of a shearing away of the external with which the civic and moral codes are easily satisfied, and an exposure of the internal and true nature of man. This takes place in the spirit world in which man participates during his earthly life and which he enters after death freed from his body which stands for the external man in Swedenborg's thought. As a spirit the hypocrisy of external behavior will naturally dissolve and the genuine loves of every man will emerge. If predominantly directed toward evil he will be sent to hell where self-love is inherently "at home"; if predominantly directed toward good his destination will be heaven where evil is foreign and good is "at home." In short, good and evil are diametrically opposed and, although mixed in earthly existence in the ambiguous interaction of appearance and reality, behavior and motive, they will be clearly revealed to be what they are in human lives after death. The challenge to the sinner now is to take seriously the true and total opposition of the two to each other by seeing them clearly and one's self in relation to them. He may not feel guilty but he is and he must recognize it. In the act of confession he must be unnaturally honest with himself. He must not simply confess sin in general but search out particular offenses. Above all, he must not neglect the search on religious principle, such as the Reformed tenet that faith alone will save one.

The point just mentioned forms the heart of our discussion of forgiveness. Again it is worth noting that Swedenborg does not use the word "forgiveness", at least in the reading suggested for this topic. Nor does he use "justification" or "imputed righteousness". "Salvation" is usually connected in a direct way with "reformation and regeneration" of character.

For instance, he writes that "a man should examine himself, see his sins, avow them, confess them before God, and desist from them; . . . this is repentance, remission of sin and hence salvation."⁴ Likewise, the three essentials of the Church are "acknowledgement of the divine (divinity?) of the Lord, acknowledgement of the holiness of the Word, and the life which is called charity."⁵ The emphasis is clearly on repentance as the major part of salvation and, moreover, a repentance that *must* issue in a good life centered on love for God and man instead of self. Swedenborg goes to great lengths to affirm this through Scripture and to use it against the kind of "faith only" preaching that apparently had gained a hearing in his day.

What exactly does Swedenborg mean? A works-righteousness which virtually eliminated faith as the means of salvation? Or is he simply acting to safeguard the integrity of faith against libertine interpretations? Is forgiveness earned by the sinner or received by God's grace through an act of the will, which will continue to direct the person toward practical righteousness in response to God's love? Legalistic language predominates

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his writing but does not exclude completely the language of grace. The question is whether he can have both and somehow remain logical. Or if logic is not a worthy goal for strictly theological matters, can he have both and somehow make any sense? Apparent contradictions seem to introduce nonsense.

For instance at one point he says, "The Lord loves man and wills to dwell with him, yet he cannot love him and dwell with him, unless He is received and loved in return."⁶ Man's responsibility seems to be a moral one, that of removing evil from the center of his life to the periphery. But elsewhere Swedenborg writes:

"As the 'face of the Lord' is mercy, peace, and every good, it is evident that He regards all from mercy, and never averts his countenance from any; but that it is man, when in evil, who turns away his face, as is said by the Lord in Isaiah: 'Your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you (*lix.2*);' and here, 'they hid themselves from the face of Jehovah, because they were naked.'"⁷

If the second statement is normative for Swedenborg, if it is man and not God who turns away his face, the first statement can be understood in a new light. The Lord will not force himself into the center of a man's life but will take that privileged position only at the man's request. The divine nature is not judgmental, but loving. In fact, love is not a part of God for Swedenborg, love IS God and God is love. In the original creation this love emanated to men, and in spite of their rejection of it in

Against the backdrop of God's attitude of love man's part in salvation takes on a slightly different light. Instead of appearing openly as Pelagian legalism it assumes a more ambiguous meaning with overtones of grace. Swedenborg's favorite technique in this regard is to say that man turns to God and sets his love on Him "as of himself". His action only seems to be completely self-propelled. In reality it is done through the Lord as He in His providence provides the desire and power to repent and fight sin to the point of regeneration. Pelagianism is eliminated by such statements as, "No one is saved by means of goods from self, because they are not good."⁹ The reason they are not good is because of man's essential corruptness which makes his actions, even the virtuous ones, "like a spring the water of which is foul from its source."¹⁰ Similarly, "... if a man wills to make himself new by his own sagacity and intelligence, it is merely like painting an ugly face, or smearing a skin-detergent over a part that is infected with inward corruption."¹¹

Ruled by self-love man cannot reason clearly about God's nature and demands and therefore willingly increases opposition to him. Given this dominance of evil in man's life, Swedenborg is not likely to do an about-face and say man can save himself by good works. It would seem that God's grace is the only thing that could turn the recalcitrant sinner about, which is the meaning of repentance. Swedenborg concedes that man can polish up the outside and remove, as it were, his outward

This essay is one of eight entries in the essay contest sponsored by the Swedenborg Foundation, Inc. for seminary students on Swedenborg and his contribution to religious thought. The author is a student in the Princeton Theological Seminary. At the time of this writing the winner of the contest has not been announced. The MESSENGER will carry further news on this matter in later issues.

favor of self-love, God continues to love even the worst sinner. The total context of this divine attitude is called "divine providence" and includes everything that God has done and is doing and plans to do for the salvation of the individual. It spans from infancy to death and involves "a continual tolerance of evil to the end that there may be continual withdrawal from it."⁸ It is here with God's persistent self-giving to men that we should probably begin for an understanding of forgiveness in Swedenborg's mind. The fact of prime importance for him, I suspect, is not what it seems to be on the page, namely, man's part, but instead God's providential action through all of man's life to bring him to salvation.

The fact that this salvation is mainly reformation of character raises immediate problems. Righteousness is in harmony with God's nature which is goodness itself, but the problem then is to balance God's love and justice within the divine nature. In the readings for this essay Swedenborg does not recognize a tension between the two, and therefore we may be safe in assuming that in his thought God's anger against sin, which necessarily follows from His goodness, is a part of the purity of His love, and that His judgment is therefore never for the sake of judgment but always for the sake of love. Nor does He reform a man for the sake of reformation *per se* but for the sake of making this love known. Man is truly man when he is receiving some of God's love and wisdom and passing it on to others, and therefore nothing is to be gained by judgment as judgment.

sins, his appearance of evil, but when it comes to the inward motives, the real or inner man, only the Lord himself is able to make a change.

1. When the will is in evil, one's own intelligence sees only falsity, and neither desires to see, nor can see, anything else.

2. If then one's own intelligence is confronted with truth, it either turns away from it or falsifies it.

3. Divine providence continually causes man to see truth, and also gives him affection for perceiving and receiving it.

4. Through this means man is withdrawn from evil, not by himself, but by the Lord.¹²

Despite many of his apparent comments to the contrary, Swedenborg intends to say that man's good works are not the means whereby he deserves salvation, but the indication that he wants to respond to and co-operate in God's providential work directed toward his salvation. God's love in operation in his life does not operate apart from his (man's) desire; man invites or implores God to work. Only, however, after God has broken the spell of self-love to such an extent that man is able to desire something else. Once he is able to make the invitation, it is essentially a confession of his own impotence and the absolute necessity of depending on God. Swedenborg's high regard for free will appears over and over again, but the important feature of this doctrine is that even in man's decision to love God supremely there occurs an "influx of the Lord's will". It is man's decision,

to be sure, but in a paradoxical way he makes it in the power of God Who provides the capacity of freedom and encourages his choice.

Why then does not Swedenborg say this most of the time instead of citing Pelagian-sounding statements in abundance? This reader feels he is trying to act as a corrective against the extreme misinterpretation of the "faith alone" principle, and in correcting it he goes to the other extreme. His straw man is cited in one passage.

"Without this reception and reciprocity, man would be like chaff in the wind, and would stand as if lifeless, with mouth open, and hands hanging down, awaiting influx, devoid of thought and action in regard to the things that concern his salvation. It is indeed true that he is by no means the agent in regard to these things, but yet he is a reagent as of himself." (*The Doctrine of Life*, 107).

In other words there is a proper passivity and an improper one—the former in the light of sin's dominion which necessitates the regenerating work of God to turn the tide, the latter in the case of a man who refuses to co-labor with God in whatever way he can in the process of regeneration. To attack the improper passivity Swedenborg refuses to countenance instant salvation or impute righteousness or a forensic type of forgiveness. Such positions to his way of thinking tend to lead to the straw man's attitude toward practical righteousness. He assumes, in fact, that they will lead to such an attitude.

This fear dominated his thought about Christ. One would think his Christology would indicate clearly whether he preferred a Pelagian or a more Augustinian approach. But some of the same ambiguity appears here and forces us to make approximate claims of what we suspect to be his normative position. He sees Christ as the Savior of men, coming in the infinite love of God to rescue the race from an accelerated moral decline. The exact nature of this salvation we have already discovered to be moral reformation and the regeneration of one's love toward God instead of self. What is Christ's function in all of this? In the limited reading for this essay Christ did not bear the sins of the world in the judicial, Anselmian fashion; God's wrath is linked too intimately with His love. Neither did He simply show a moral example for the sinner to imitate the best he could. He came to effect a great judgment in the spiritual world by assuming our defiled natures and defeating all the evil accumulated therein since creation. Spalding writes, "The one condition essential to this divine and perpetual subjugation of our hereditary and acquired evils is that we should love to have them thus subdued" (Spalding's, *Introduction to Swedenborg's Religious Thought*, p. 215).

The critical question is whether this position is a true equivalent of the Biblical pronouncement that God in Christ reconciled man to Himself no matter what man does about it. Man must affirm this divine act to be true for him and commence a new life of God-directed righteousness, but the redemptive work has been done. This finality is not always present in Swedenborg. His fear of the straw man eliminates it. Moreover, the question may well be put to him, Can a man lose his salvation by failing to desire his own reformation even though he began sincerely? Swedenborg recognizes that the Christian will always have ambiguous feelings—this is what the fight against sin entails—but he is not clear, as Calvin is, on the grand and overriding faithfulness of God!

In short, Swedenborg's ambivalent stance on the fence between grace and legalism provokes genuine questions at many points. Nevertheless, he is to be admired for his caution and profound respect for a transforming

faith. At the same time he deserves criticism for the fact that the faith is often more concerned about man's uncompleted march toward full regeneration than with Christ's "finished work". But this paper is an attempt to show that for Swedenborg the two were probably not mutually exclusive. His exposition of the union forbids absolute certainty.

1. Swedenborg, Emanuel. *Divine Providence*. Swedenborg Foundation, New York 1961. note 296.3

2. Swedenborg, Emanuel. *Arcana Coelestia*, vol. 1. Swedenborg Foundation, New York, 1956. note 257.

3. Swedenborg, Emanuel. *The Four Doctrines: The Doctrine of Life*. Swedenborg Foundation, New York, 1954. notes 12-13.

4. Swedenborg, Emanuel. *Divine Providence*. note 127.

5. *Ibid.* note 259.3

6. Swedenborg, Emanuel. *The Four Doctrines: The Doctrine of Life*. note 102.

7. Swedenborg, Emanuel. *Arcana Coelestia*, vol. 1. note 223.

8. Swedenborg, Emanuel. *Divine Providence*. note 296.8.

9. Swedenborg, Emanuel. *The Four Doctrines: The Doctrine of Life*. note 30.

10. *Ibid.* note 25.

11. *Ibid.* note 112.

12. Swedenborg, Emanuel. *Divine Providence*. note 297.

REVELATION IN SWEDENBORG

Continued from page 21

grandeur of the spiritual world's sun becomes plain, also, in the history of Swedenborg's sight of it. At first he is only told of its existence (*Spiritual Diary*, n. 4219). Somewhat later he beholds it in a vision (*Spiritual Diary*, n. 4639), not by the opened sight of his spirit. He is well into the *Arcana* (n. 1531) when he writes, "I have not yet seen the sun." Only after the *Arcana* is finished and *Heaven and Hell* is written, does Swedenborg say (n. 118), "I have been permitted to see the sun." The word "permitted" suggests that he was brought into a given state of life in order to do so, and for a moment. Then comes the exclamation, it seems to me quite triumphant, "I have seen the sun" (*Divine Love and Wisdom*, n. 85(2)). Next he writes of the constant sight of it in a glowing sentence: "The Lord alone has taught me, who revealed Himself to me, and afterwards continued to appear to me, as He now does, as the sun in which He is, as He appears to the angels, and He has enlightened me" (*Divine Providence*, n. 135e).

There is much to note in the words "as He appears to angels." Elsewhere Swedenborg particularizes and says what angels. At first, the Seer was in the world of spirits and in its light, but without sight of the source of the light. When he was told of the source, he was also told that only the men and women of the highest heaven beheld the sun, for theirs is the necessary warmth of love that makes the fire of Infinite love real to them. The same central fire comes to the sense of believing minds in the middle heaven as the moon, for with them its light is reflected in faith. Then came more precision. In the lowermost heaven, sharing it with those of a believing mind, there were also folks of the warm heart. These angels also see the sun. Involved, then, in the statement that the Lord appeared to Swedenborg as the sun, as He does to angels, is Swedenborg's personal pilgrimage, from his religious crisis onward, to the

measure of a celestial angel, whether of the highest or lowest heaven. "I have been introduced by the Lord among the celestial" (*Spiritual Diary*, n. 5116). How far along this is from the first three years of his other-world experience! In summation of those years he wrote: "As concerns myself, I have now for three years sensibly perceived that I was detained in such a bond, so that I seemed to myself to think, will and act from myself; and also that I have been detained in the sphere of faith during these years" (*Spiritual Diary*, n. 2739.)

At first Swedenborg's speech with angels was indirect, through spirits, which also means that he was in the world of spirits. Progress in communication, like all else, was gradual. When speech with any in heaven first occurred, Swedenborg wrote that he spoke with them "cogitatively" (*Spiritual Diary*, n. 4433), which I take to mean a wordless exchange of thought. "Twice," he says, "I was in speech almost like that of angelic spirits" (*Lesser Diary* n. 4598). Then comes a statement: "I spoke with some in the third heaven, and was granted partly to understand" (*Spiritual Diary*, n. 4670). Indirectly and then directly Swedenborg was drawing on and entering into the wisdom of the angels. Listening to what a spirit transmitted, he would so obviously study the truth of what was said, the spirit resented it. But he was intent on what he could learn. It was as if he said, when speech with angels came about, "You who have been in this world so long, what can you tell me of it and of its part in creation?" From that extended inquiry came the volume entitled *Angelic Wisdom about Divine Love and Wisdom*. Again, "You who have attained heaven, what can you tell me, as you look back, about the providence that guided you here?" From the inquiry came the volume entitled *Angelic Wisdom about Divine Providence*.

The enlightenment they could give they had, however, from the Lord; their wisdom came from His Word in heaven. In "living experiences" as Swedenborg called them, he was moving by the lane of other-world converse into light from the Lord. So he was also by the other lane, his equally long study and exploration of Scripture, for there the Lord was present with enlightenment in the Word's internal sense. The days were past when he used to note obscurities and slips in something he had written, and said "it is quite different when I am in the light of the Lord" (*Spiritual Diary*, n. 2372). The light on all matter of revelation had steadied, and he could begin the public delivery of what had been revealed to him and what was still to be revealed to him. All along effort was demanded of him. Above all, he had to seek and welcome that light. He had to discern the nature of a spirit, good or bad, who sought to lead him; more than once he had to detect a false impersonation (*Spiritual Diary*, nn. 484(2), 461). If in the *Adversaria* he wrote, "See if this is to be inserted," or "This may need to be amended," he was reflecting; if he withstands attacks by hostile spirits, whatever the angelic or divine protection he is withstanding them; if he says he grasps the utterance of an angel only partly, he means to grasp

it better; when he finds himself one among angels and cleansed by rebirth, must he not have been seeking it? When testings and questionings and unperceptive hours are past, and enlightenment from the Lord is his, he turns to the further task of giving men what has been given to him.

Is not the manner of revelation to Swedenborg which has been described the manner of revelation to John in Patmos, the scene partly earth but also the other world, angelic agency involved, a servant from among men counted on, the Lord seen in vision, a command given, "Write!" If the one is recognized, must not the other be?

II Revelation by him

Having considered how Swedenborg came to what was revealed to him, we turn to his delivery of it to the world. The path with two lanes over which he had made his way to revelation (and was to make his way to further revelation) reappears in his first published work, the lengthy *Arcana Coelestia*. The two lanes are pursued. The sub-title of that great work divides it between "the heavenly arcana unfolded which are contained in the Word of the Lord" and "the wonderful things seen in the world of spirits and in the heaven of angels." A number of volumes on—volume eight in our English set—the path over which delivery is made of the revelation widens to three lanes. Swedenborg pursues three tasks then at the same time; besides expounding the spiritual meaning to be found in Genesis and Exodus, and besides description of the spiritual world, he begins the formulation of doctrine from the sense of the letter of the Word. Three of the main contents of the revelation which he is to publish to the world are in sight. Works to follow the *Arcana* will add to one or another of these three main revealed contents. Two-thirds of them all (counting the *Arcana*) are presentations of the internal sense of the Word. A fourth body of revealed content, which we can also call a main content, appears with *Divine Love and Wisdom* and *Divine Providence*.

Three of these chief contents of the revelation to be made to the world stand plain in our minds for being what we advance for the most part in the work of the church, by pulpit or literature, namely, word of the unseen world, the deeper meaning of the Word, and doctrine drawn from Scripture. The doctrine is meant for the reconstruction of Christian thought. What we can know of the Word's spiritual sense will elevate that thought. The disclosure of life beyond is not only to give comfort in bereavement and light on death, but to raise before us early in life a deathless goal. On the fourth content of the revelation Swedenborg makes to the world we probably draw less often, that is, on the religious philosophy of *Divine Love and Wisdom*, and on its concept of creation, the creation of the universe as a living spiritual-natural or psycho-physical organism, not a machine. More often we draw on the book *Divine Providence* and its assurance of God's care, a manner of care fitted to such a world, and possible only in it. We

need to keep all these revealed contents in mind and feel the weight and mass of them as we consider Swedenborg's presentation of them.

Meaning used

How did he set down for us what was revealed to him? We are familiar with his statement that the man chosen for the task should be in position to publish it by the press. That was a modest statement, indeed. Much was involved, not mentioned by him, besides financial ability, incredible industry, two handwritten drafts of large volume after volume, travel, arduous in that day, to cities where he would find a free press. The other half of Swedenborg's statement of what was needed was also an understatement and even more modest—the man chosen must be able to receive with the understanding what was revealed to him. Nothing, of course, about a towering intellect; about a strictly disciplined and objectively observing mind, the result of command of one science after another; nothing, in this statement, about personal integrity, deep perception, or regenerateness. As a philosopher in science he brought along such concepts as degrees, form, and correspondence, to carry them into loftier applications among spiritual realities. He was bound to confess the light vouchsafed to him by the Lord. By divine provision his mind was moving in that light. Dr. Acton goes so far as to make this statement about the Seer's brain: "A long course of deep and abstract thought had so moulded Swedenborg's brain, had so opened and formed the interior organism of its nerve-cells wherein the mind performs her operations, that he had been gradually initiated into thinking from spiritual light." Whether or not he mentioned them, Swedenborg brought all his gifts and powers to the years-long task of presenting what was revealed to him.

The presentation was his sustained labor, and what he was chosen for. It can be distinguished from what he presents, the contents of the revelation to him. It should be distinguished, for otherwise we shall be less clear and certain about what is revealed. The blanket assertion or statement that the Theological Works are a revelation is meant well, but it gets one into unnecessary difficulties and the necessity of arguing for every statement made. We dropped the similar assertion about the Bible, that every word of it from cover to cover is God's truth. Throughout the Bible we discriminate between "Genuine truth" and "apparent truth", or truth as it appeared to a writer of Scripture, God's aversion to evil, for instance, which appeared to him to be anger in God. Why transfer to the Theological Works the blanket assertion which was abandoned about the Bible? The last thing this means, however, is that Swedenborg's presentation is not plain, not transparent to what is revealed, not powerful or comprehensive in conveying it. It is all of this and more. It only means that the presentation is his work. "The grain of intuition," Dr. Benz says, and we can say "the grain of revelation," "grows on the stalk of human comprehension."

First, Swedenborg had to choose the language in which to make his presentation, a ready choice, of

course, and in the circumstances no choice. He had been writing in Latin for years, and just went on with it, with a fluency matching his industry, and an amazingly large vocabulary for anyone to possess in a second language. Latin would carry his presentation far more widely than any vernacular would. It was the Latin which he had studied at Upsala, that is, classical Latin, which had been revived in Europe in the Renaissance, but was simplified in usage by him. The language, then, is his, just as Isaiah wrote in his language, an exalted Hebrew style, Nahum in his, a very different staccato style. In the *Adversaria* Swedenborg had remarked: "An angel who inspires a prophet's words is in spiritual things only, and acts into the mind of the prophet . . . The word's are the prophet's, and are according to his comprehension" (3/6965). Terms for precision, furthermore, had to be hewed out, like designations of the different heavens, or of the levels in the structure of the mind, some of the later designations not the same as the earliest. Again, when in the course of nearly thirty years, Swedenborg took up a subject for the second time or a third time, he strove for better wording and greater clarity. The plan of a book is his. The revealed content could influence the plan, and in such expository works as the *Arcana* and the two on the *Book of Revelation* naturally did. The interchapter material in the *Arcana* on heaven and hell was not only rewritten but considerably rearranged for publication in the book *Heaven and Hell*. The subject of providence received a different presentation in *Divine Providence* from that in the interchapter discussion in the *Apocalypse Explained*. In the latter work the laws of providence were not as precisely seen as in *Divine Providence*.

The framework of the Theological Works, then, is Swedenborg's providing: the language (somewhere he remarked that things had been made as plain as could be for anyone who knows Latin); the terms, for which a glossary is often asked; the clarifications achieved as he takes up a subject a second or third time. An unusual clarification of his thinking came when he dropped the *Apocalypse Explained* unfinished, and wrote the *Apocalypse Revealed*. The former work is a large reservoir of explanation of the spiritual sense of the Word at large, but the latter is the more precise, clearer and meatier in exposition of the spiritual sense of the *Book of Revelation* specifically. Even so, the *Apocalypse Explained* could have been finished. It was not, because it was written on a certain premise. The premise was that at the end of a religious era the spiritual life is renewed in a different area. It had held good in pre-Christian eras, and had not Christianity itself moved from Palestine to the Gentile world? But Swedenborg was witnessing the formation of new heavens ensuing on the judgment which fell on the first Christian era, and these heavens were being formed of Christians of the Gospel days and down. Now the spiritual life was to be revived where it had run its course in a first era. Early in *Apocalypse Revealed* (n. 69) Swedenborg wrote: "By the 'seven churches' are described all in the Christian Church who have religion,

and of whom a new church, which is the New Jerusalem, can be formed; and it is being formed of those who approach the Lord alone and at the same time do repentance from evil works." Later he addressed an invitation to Christians to enter this new church. Would he do so without hope? And was it not Christianity which was to see renewal?

The framework of the Theological Works, cradling and conveying the various bodies of revealed content, includes much from Swedenborg's hand, which was not a subject of revelation, indeed often was common knowledge.

Facts adduced

Facts of all kinds are adduced by him. For instance, what the Athanasian Creed says; what a papal bull said confirming a decree of the Council of Trent; other facts of ecclesiastical history; many facts physiological and anatomical; such a strange fact as that mummy was a pharmaceutical item; a fact of classical times, that a temple was built in Rome to the goddess Fortune; the fact that the Koran draws upon Old Testament and New. Swedenborg notes that some doubted providence because Mohammedanism had more adherents than Christianity. So it did in his day, apparently, but does not now. Facts change. In connection with what is said about Islam, a surprising statement is made: "The Christian religion is accepted only in the smaller division of the globe called Europe" (*Divine Providence*, n. 256). Of course, Christianity existed from the beginning in Asia and Africa, did in Swedenborg's day, and does today. Even more arresting is the same statement carried farther: "Christianity obtains only in Europe; Mohammedanism and gentilism are found in Asia, the Indies, Africa, and America" (*Divine Providence*, n. 330(7)). Our neighbor, Harvard, was founded in 1936 to provide the colonists with a trained Christian ministry. Swedenborg's brother Jasper worked for some years among his Lutheran countrymen in Delaware where Swedes had settled. Moreover, the Lutheran mission there was under the supervision of Swedenborg's father. The statement is hard to explain, is it not? I can explain it to myself only by the likelihood that, setting down what is not at all a subject of revelation, Swedenborg dashed it off without looking back at it.

The characterizations made in the Theological Works of conditions and concepts of the Christian church in Swedenborg's time present us with a combination of revelation and fact. These conditions and ways of thinking were revealed to Swedenborg in the other world rather than observed by him in this world, and were inward states, not so surely discernible in this world. Still those conditions and state of mind were fact, and these facts, too, can change. For how long will the characterizations written then hold good? Would the same misbeliefs and spiritual desolation be revealed in the world beyond now? Are the statements factual still after two hundred years? Is it still night, or is a new and promised morning dawning? At least must we not inquire?

Factual statements, not at all part of the revealed content, need raise no such question. Swedenborg's commission was disclosure of the internal sense of the Word. A remark would fall now and then, however, into the field of historical study of Scripture. He spoke, for instance (*Arcana Coelestia*, n. 6752(4e), of the Psalms as having been written earlier than the Prophets. He was reciting the best information of his day. On one book, the prophecy of Jonah, he seems to do more, he is so emphatic. The literary character of a book is open to examination. Is Jonah history or a story? It was taken for history in Swedenborg's day and still is by many, and he calls it historical (*Arcana Coelestia*, n. 1188(2)). This could be understood to mean only that it is thrown into the form of history. But he also says that what the book relates actually happened (*Spiritual Diary*, n. 1391). A proud capital of the ancient world, Nineveh, then adopted the Jewish faith, without a word in its annals or elsewhere in the Bible of such an astounding fact. The real point of the short book is a sharp rebuke to the narrow outlook of the Jewish nation at that time, so in contrast with Isaiah's outlook that the faith should be a light to the Gentiles. A story about a prophet unwilling to take the light to another, and a hated, people can deliver that rebuke with power. Swedenborg also writes (*Apocalypse Explained*, n. 401(36) that the book means that as a nation the Jews then wished well to no other nation. But is the literary form of a book a subject of revelation?

Swedenborg's own

We must include, along with illustrations of points, as Swedenborg's own, arguments for what he is presenting. Consider some which urge the existence of an internal sense in the Word. They are often like those of the allegorizer on Scripture. Swedenborg will say of a Scripture passage that it is meaningless unless there is the deeper sense which he is disclosing. This is given a sweeping application to the Prophets in the Old Testament. Their style of writing, he says (*Arcana Coelestia*, n. 66(2)), is hardly intelligible except in the internal sense. This may reflect the exegesis of that day, but think of all the volumes of detailed commentary on the Prophets that occupy the shelves in a theological school's library. The Prophets spoke meaningfully enough to bring them persecution. The Lord said that He fulfilled the Prophets, that is, carried their great truths further, like Hosea's conception of a God of unremitting love. Monotheism came clear and strong in the Prophets. Their insistence on the introduction of the moral and spiritual law into all human activities is the origin of the "social gospel," so-called. The field of exegesis of the literal sense was not Swedenborg's field. Nor is that exegesis a matter of revelation; it is the work of students and expositors on a revelation already given.

Distinguishing between the revealed content in the Theological Works and the framework in which that content is cradled and conveyed helps one not to erect into revelation what is not revelation. It makes one clear about the revealed content, and clarity on that is

of far greater moment. When one is clear about that, and is concentrating on it (spiritual meaning, doctrine, or other-world disclosure), Swedenborg's presentation is itself light on the other world, is the upgathered doctrine of Scripture, is a delivery of some part of the Word's internal meaning. Items such as we have been discussing, which in the first place are not matters of revelation and are also widely scattered and marginal, are lost from sight, hard as we have looked at them, or because we have looked at them hard.

His testimony

Two assertions are made in the Theological Works about the revelation in them, consideration of which our topic certainly calls for. One is our revelator's solemn attestation in *True Christian Religion*, n. 779: "I also testify that from the first day of my call, I have not received anything pertaining to the doctrine of the church from any angel but from the Lord alone while reading the Word." We have seen how much Swedenborg learned from angels, that is, wise men and women in the heavens. He sets forth arcana, things known to them, but not yet to men. He does relate much he has learned in years of converse with them. He avows it in the full titles of two books, *Angelic Wisdom about Divine Love and Wisdom* and *Angelic Wisdom about Divine Providence*. But, we may say, angels have their wisdom from the Word which they have in heaven, and thus the Lord. Does that, however, quite do justice to the emphatic "not from any angel, but from the Lord alone"? Explanation rests on two things, first on precisely what it is that has not been received from any angel, and second on the process by which this was received. Swedenborg's attestation concerned doctrine—that particular revealed content in the Theological Works. The attestation occurs also in his final summary of doctrine. The reference was not to such philosophic concepts as those in *Divine Love and Wisdom* and *Divine Providence*—concepts of creation by God and of care by God. Nor was it to disclosure of the Word's internal sense, telling of God's activity in one's inner life. Doctrine is what is to be believed and done. Creation we do not do, nor do we carry on providence; believe in both, yes. Our inner life God handles, and He is the author of our rebirth. But doctrine—that is what is to be believed by us and done by us. Of it Swedenborg is making his solemn attestation, "not from any angel have I receive it, but from the Lord alone while reading the Word." No question, he had heard much of it in converse with angels, but now in formulating it he did so from the sense of the letter of the Word. A living doctrine addresses the conscience and says not only "believe" but "do." That imperative can come only from the Lord. It must also have been sounded in earlier revelation, and in the Word we have in Scripture, and the doctrine must have a plain and enduring base there. The doctrine, then, was received by Swedenborg from the Lord alone, present in the Word and enlightening him, and drawn now from Scripture.

The other striking assertion made in the Theological Works about the revelation in them, consideration of

which our topic as certainly calls for, is made in the little work *Invitation to a New Church*. The statement is that the disclosure of the spiritual sense of the Word surpasses all the revelations which have existed hitherto since the creation of the world" (n. 44). What a sweeping assertion it is! The Bible included? In *True Christian Religion* Swedenborg had just called the Word of Old and New Testament "the crown of revelations." All along he had declared that the Word in the sense of the letter, that is, in Scripture, is in its fulness, holiness and power. What then do we make of this assertion about the disclosure of the spiritual sense? That assertion is echoed in statements of ours, and the reverberation improves on it, relating it to the Theological Works as a whole, not only to the disclosure in them of the Word's internal sense. Recently in the *MESSENGER* some one wrote: "Why is the New Church so slow a-borning? To those of us in the church it represents the highest revelation of divine truth." In the Introductory volume to *The Word Explained*, at page 145, Dr. Acton asserts: "In the Writings of the New Church we have the most perfect of all revelations." So the Theological Works are placed, not on a par with the Word we have in the Bible, but even above it. Presumably Bible readers and lovers would be a receptive company for our teachings, certainly offer more of a field for our efforts than those who dismiss the Bible and all revelation, but is this not a sure way to estrange them? But what of Swedenborg's own statement, exalting the disclosure of the spiritual sense of the Word? Does it conflict with his estimate of the Word in the Bible as "the crown of revelations"? Can he be denying that? How can he be when he draws all doctrine from that Word and in its plain sense? And in this way exalts it? When he says that it is by the sense of the letter that the Word brings heaven's influences around us and unites us with the God of heaven? Is he not again exalting the biblical Word? In that Word with a plain sense for us earthlings and possessed of the amplitude of meaning that correspondential utterance alone can give, God's truth, our teachings say, resides in fulness. Part of the fulness is the content called the spiritual sense, which exists in its full self only in the Word. Swedenborg often avows that he cannot disclose more than a fraction of that sense, despite the great bulk of his exposition of it. Furthermore, he has had to bring it out of its language in the heavens, where it is its full self and completely at home, and bring it into the language of earth, where it struggles to make itself at home. He is not saying that what he has to offer of the Word's depths of meaning surpasses the Word of Old and New Testament. He demonstrates, rather, and discloses the unexpected depths which exist in that Word, and once again exalts it as "the crown of revelations." For doing that, nothing surpasses some sight of those depths.

The author of this carefully reasoned article (originally given as a lecture) is well known in our church. Formerly he was a professor in the Theological School, and has written several scholarly books.

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February 1—7	8033—8060
8—14	8061—8094
15—21	8095—8124
22—28	8125—8157

IN ITS INTERNAL SENSE the thirteenth chapter of Exodus treats of faith in the Lord, as signified by the sanctification of the first-born, and the perpetual remembrance of liberation by the Lord, as signified by the celebration of the Passover.

Introductory to this chapter is a brief treatise on the Doctrine of Charity, in which charity and faith are defined as follows: "Charity is an internal affection which consists in a heartfelt desire to do the neighbor good, and in this being the delight of life; and this without any reward" (8034). "On the other hand, Faith is an internal affection which consists in a heartfelt desire to know what is true and good, and this not for the sake of doctrine as the end in view, but for the sake of life" (8034).

Under the explanation of the words "Sanctify to me all the first-born," the expressions "good of truth" and "truth of good" are used. These are technical terms with which every student of religion should be familiar. Every science and art—even every sport—has its special vocabulary. If one studies chemistry, many new words have to be learned. Psychology has a vocabulary of its own and a rather chaotic one; yet those who are interested in it take pride in knowing this vocabulary and using it. Only in religion does there seem to be a demand that we speak in terms which can be understood without any mental effort. Yet in religion, as in everything else, special terms are necessary for clear, concise, and definite statement. Swedenborg is careful to define his terms, and every Newchurchman should be willing to make the effort to look up his definitions and become familiar with his terms.

While man is being regenerated, he learns what is true and right. At first these truths are matters of mere knowledge, but when they are received in the will and carried out into act, they become goods, and are the "good of truth." Truth is turned into good by doing it. Then with the regenerate man charity comes to hold first place. He is in the love of good. A regenerate man sees things differently from one who is unregenerate or who is in the process of reformation preparatory to regeneration. From interior perception he recognizes in his study of the Word and of religion in general what is true and right, and sees how good is to be done. This is the "truth of good." The "good of truth" may be likened to the fruit produced from a seed, and the "truth of good" to the seed within the fruit so produced, which is capable of bearing more fruit. "While man is being regenerated, he is led by faith in the understanding, or in doctrine, to faith in the will or life, that is by means of the truth of faith to the good of charity; and when man is in the good of charity, he has then regenerated, and then from this good he produces truths, which are called the 'truths of good'" (8042). Since we learn else-

where that with one who regenerates, regeneration is never finished, but goes on to eternity, we realize that this double sequence is being repeated again and again is our experience on higher and higher levels. We never reach the point in this world at which we no longer need to study the truth.

Another important lesson in our reading is found in number 8051ff., where we are shown that there is a distinction between falsity conjoined to evil and so appropriated into the life of the individual, and falsity accepted by the mind on the authority of parents or teachers by those who want to do right and who thus do not use the falsity as a support of evil but "soften" it into some sort of conformity with their good. Note especially the statement in number 8051 that "Unless this were the case, scarcely anyone could be saved, for falsities are more prevalent than truths."

In number 8054² we are reminded that with the changes in the states of men on earth specific changes also take place in the spiritual world. Here this fact is considered especially in connection with the First Advent, but section 3 of the same number, in quoting *Revelation* 12:7,8, points out the further changes in the spiritual world which were to take place at the time of the Second advent. These changes are described for us in detail in the *Apocalypse Explained* and the *Apocalypse Revealed*.

The uses of temptation, and the care of the Lord to preserve from temptation those who are not strong enough to face it are described by the Lord's choice for the Israelites of the way of the Red Sea and the wilderness instead of the shorter "way of the Philistines." And in numbers 8105—8110 we have a very helpful development of the meaning of the pillar of cloud and fire.

The short interchapter reading on the spirits from Jupiter makes the interesting comment that the people of the Most Ancient Church on our earth were in similar states and ways of life.

And in the reading on the Doctrine of Charity we should all ponder the plain statement: "He who does what is unjust for the sake of any self-advantage whatever, hates his neighbor."

Notes

8049. Infestation by falsities is spiritual captivity. It is the truth that makes us free.

8051. Falsity and what is falsified cannot be appropriated as such to anyone who is in good, because "he thinks well in respect to God, the kingdom of God, and spiritual life." Note also the last sentence in this number.

8054. On the nations in the land of Canaan. This gives a deeper meaning to the casting out of these nations by the Israelites.

8056. In the expression so frequently found in the Word, "a land flowing with milk and honey," milk means the truth of good, and honey the good of truth.

8062. Note this difference: "What is falsified is truth applied to confirm evil, and falsity is everything that is contrary to truth."

8063. Study this section, especially the statement; "The sphere of the extension of truth is according to the quality and the amount of good," but remembering that Swedenborg often says that "good receives all its quality from truth."

8093^{3,4}. Note that the idea of "faith alone" has existed among men at least from the time of those called "Cain."

8127. "The Divine Itself does not instruct and speak with men, nor indeed with angels immediately; but mediately by means of Divine truth." This is a direct denial of the teaching of some churches and cults today.

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The following article appeared in "The American New Church League Journal," Summer 1962. It was written by Steve Koke, one of our young people and Assistant Editor of the Journal. It has a fresh viewpoint and some very interesting suggestions.

HOW TO READ SWEDENBORG

SO MUCH ADVICE has been given over the years on how to read Swedenborg that it is probably time to clear the air just a little bit with some suggestions that are just a little bit unorthodox:

1. *Don't read according to any prearranged plan.* A plan limits the freedom your imagination must have to enjoy itself most. The most fascinating explorations and the most gratifying discoveries are made when one makes them himself. A prearranged plan will eventually strangle your interest if your interest is weak, and will be entirely unnecessary if it is strong.

2. *Read with a question.* If you don't read with some curiosity you won't absorb anything; Swedenborg is easiest for those who have many questions. A question in this sense is not only one that you can verbalize. It can also be a kind of hunger or curiosity for the kind of truth Swedenborg claims to offer. In fact, the deepest and most vital questions are only felt; it may not be easy or even possible to verbalize them at all.

3. *Don't listen to anyone who tells you that Swedenborg is difficult.* Whether or not Swedenborg is difficult isn't at all important. For those who really want to understand (or those who read with a question), Swedenborg at his most difficult is at least stimulating. Swedenborg becomes discouragingly difficult only for those who are not strongly interested.

Emphasizing Swedenborg as a difficult author may make him seem like a discouraging, forbidding author, also. And to mention him as a difficult author has the same effect as emphasizing it. He is not a difficult author in this sense. It is better to say simply that those who genuinely want to know will know. Or to put it another way: If you enjoy what you do understand and want to understand more, you won't mind the effort it may take.

4. *Let your imagination roam freely.* There are two ways of reading theological material: (a) With a tight, hard literalism that will not allow any speculation beyond what is immediately perceived in the words one reads, and (b) with an imagination that adds to the literal meaning of a passage all sorts of possible further interpretations and implications. . . . Play with what you read. I don't mean play irresponsibly, but here again we come across the idea of reading with a question. If the question is sincerely asked, one's imagination won't twist a meaning into a meaning that is opposite or antagonistic to it. It won't find any pleasure in doing so.

A lot of different interpretations of an idea make its real meaning clearer. Strict literalism, whether it has been applied to the Bible or to Swedenborg, has, I think, always come about as a subconsciously motivated substitute for clearer understanding. Intolerance in the use of one's own imagination, and afterwards intolerance towards the ideas and interpretations of others, seems

to provide a security for one's faith when it cannot be made secure by actually seeing its truth in experience. On the other hand, a lively imagination helps define the truth by constantly testing and weighing it by means of alternative meanings. The truth can become best known only when it is seen reacting on its alternatives.

. . . The purpose of freeing one's imagination is to acquire the strongest and most rewarding faith one can. Whatever the truth is, it is loved more by trying to see it more clearly. The questions one asks from a love of truth are not expressions of doubt, but are devices to get rid of the doubt that always comes when the truth is not understood.

5. *Read other authors.* We might list this as a more elaborate way to free the imagination. But if this seems like recommending too much, don't take it too seriously—like (2) this one can also be reworded: Swedenborg will be understood better as your reading habits take in other authors besides Swedenborg; particularly scientists, philosophers, the better novelists. This will happen gradually as your interests expand.

6. *Don't pay too much attention to anyone's rules for reading Swedenborg.* That is, don't consciously follow any rules, even the one's I've given. The best way to read is to read freely, guided by your interest. One should read well, and this means that one should read as if he were following rules, but the best way to do this is to read (or formulate your own) rules and then to forget about them. They should turn you in the right direction, but no more than that.

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