

Swedenborg. The Word of God says that "Jesus Christ of God is made unto us wisdom and righteousness and sanctification and redemption." But Swedenborg believed in no such atoning and vicarious Saviour, in no forensic righteousness. We believe, as well as he did, in the necessity for personal righteousness, or rather for personal holiness, "without which no man shall see the Lord," but this belief could never lead us to view the work of redemption as a mere overthrow of the power of wicked spirits, "continually bearing down by their infernal influx upon the souls, and at length even upon the bodies of men, and threatening to engulf them in a common perdition," whereby men were enabled to partake of the Divine influx and "*redeem themselves.*"

*Resurrection of the Body.*—This doctrine is rejected by the New Jerusalem Church, not on the testimony of Scripture, for Swedenborg observed that "the doctrine of the re-union of the same body to the soul has been permitted by Divine Providence lest men should have not believed in any resurrection at all," but on that of the false prophet's own asserted revelations. "Man," he says, "is a spirit clothed for the time with a body." But since this view would present many obstacles to the consistent working out of his own theories, he states that the spirit has a human form, "has senses, namely of touch, of smell, of hearing, of seeing, much more exquisite than when in the body; has appetites, cupidities, desires, affections, loves, such as in the world, but in a more excellent degree;" is in fact, in all respects, similar and at the same time superior to the same spirit clothed with the body. The sleep of which Paul speaks, and the resurrection of the spiritual body, evidently do not agree with this piece of refined materialism. Strange that some should prefer Swedenborg!

Swedenborg did not teach self-abnegation. He says in plain words, "It is by no means forbidden any one to enjoy the pleasures of the body and of sensual things." And yet he professes to be a follower of Him who said "Hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of heaven;" "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me." Swedenborgianism is the antipodes of Plymouthism—the one destroys its influence for good by leaving the world in an exclusive spirit of self-righteousness; the other shows its hollowness as a religion by identifying itself with the same world. Finally, to use the language quoted from some unnamed but sensible opponent of the system, by one who with all the zeal of a new convert seeks to uphold its doctrines: "It sets before us a religion of the fancy; its piety is merely a species of spiritual romancing; it appeals more to an excited imagination than to sober reason; it ministers too much to vain curiosity, and too little to sound reason; its legitimate product is persuasion rather than faith, and it is not a genial soil for the growth of the staid, stern and hardy virtues of self-denial, patience, and never-ceasing devotion to the higher interests of our fellow men." The religion of Swedenborg is very far removed from the religion of Christ, and however true and beautiful some fragments of its system may be, its influence as a whole cannot fail to be in the highest degree deadening and soul-destroying.