

principles of the New Jerusalem Church, the following exposition of the leading distinctions between them and the orthodox belief is drawn:

*Rule of Faith.*—According to the standard of our own and of all other Reformed Churches, the Bible is the only rule of faith. But, while Swedenborg accepted the Bible, he added thereto his own revelations. He professed to hold communication with the unseen spiritual world, thus making known to men the secrets of a future state. And lest others should be jealous of this privilege as accorded to him alone, he affirmed that it is possible for all men to hold an open and sensible communication with that world. More than this, he asserted that in the choice made of himself by Divine revelation as founder of the New Jerusalem Church in 1743, and in the publication of that and subsequent revelations, were exhibited the second advent of Our Lord, and the fulfilment of all that is written in the Book of Revelation. In this way is an attempt made to supersede the Word of God by the exaltation of Swedenborg as prophet of a new religion.

*Interpretation.*—In a sense Swedenborg received the whole of the Word of God, but he did not lock upon it all as equally inspired. There are some books that he had a grudge against, because they present no field whatever for the exercise of his peculiar system of interpretation. It is not true, as our Confession of Faith on the authority of the Word says, that "these things which are necessary to be known, believed and observed for salvation, are so clearly propounded and opened in some place of Scripture or other, that not only the learned, but the unlearned in a due use of the ordinary means, may attain unto a sufficient understanding of them." Nor is it true, as it is therein also asserted, that "the infallible rule of interpretation of Scripture is the Scripture itself." All necessary truths in order to the highest kind of salvation, for there is a lower which very good christians may obtain, are contained in the writings of Emanuel Swedenborg, and he is the infallible interpreter of the Word of God. According to him, there are in the Word three senses, "a celestial, a spiritual, and a natural sense." Such three senses he found in all the historical books of the Old and New Testament except Ruth, Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther and the Acts of the Apostles; in all the prophetic books and in the Psalms and Lamentations of Jeremiah. But Job, the books of Solomon, and the epistles of the New Testament, with those above mentioned as exceptions, being the fruit of a lower order of inspiration, are not susceptible of the same mode of treatment. Here is a sample of this interpretation from the Apocalypse Revealed: "Reuben in a supreme sense signifies omniscience, in a Spiritual sense wisdom, intelligence, science, as also faith; in a natural sense, sight." "Purple signifies celestial good, and scarlet celestial truth." "Fine linen signifies genuine truth." Hence the man who was clothed in purple and fine linen was invested with celestial good and genuine truth. So refined a system of trifling puts to the blush all such feeble attempts at allegorizing as disfigured the interpretation of many of the fathers of the early Church.

The whole of Swedenborg's system as it regards the Word of God is a system of interpretation, if he and his followers are to be believed. Faith is not called in to grasp truths that are beyond the sphere of reason, for the simple reason that there are none which are so. Every doctrine must "establish itself upon the rational plane of the Swedenborgian's mind;" and since many doctrines which we find plainly taught in the Word are not on the "rational plane of the human mind" the Swedenborgian rejects