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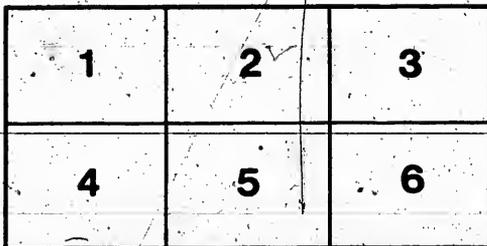
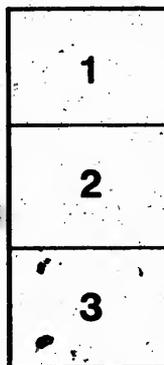
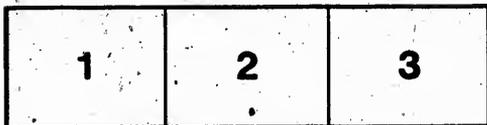
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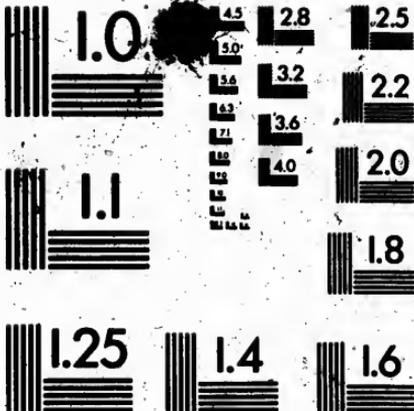
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# SWEDENBORG

ON

## THE SCRIPTURAL SENSE OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURES.

WITH SHORT NOTES ON ALLEGORICAL MODES OF INTER-  
PRETATION AND THE DIVINE "PERSON" OF  
OUR SAVIOUR.

BY THE

REV. WILLIAM BEVAN,

*Incumbent of Christ Church, West Flamboro'.*

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TORONTO:

WILLIAM BRIGGS.

MONTREAL: C. W. COATES. | HALIFAX: S. F. HUESTIS.

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## PREFACE.

SWEDENBORGIANISM, and Plymouth Brethrenism, are the two extremes of modern religious speculation.

Swedenborgianism is an exhibition of religious optimism, and Plymouthism of religious pessimism.

They both possess an extensive literature, and each endeavors to establish from Holy Scripture the exact opposite to the other. The world, and all that therein is, is as bad as it can be in the eyes of Plymouthism. On the contrary, the world is materially, morally, and spiritually improving at such a rate—such lightning speed—that Swedenborgianism tells us the New Jerusalem has descended, and the judgment passed. With every respect for the conscientiousness of the advocates of these two extremes, may we not humbly believe that, in all probability, the truth lies somewhere between them. Having examined the pessimism of Plymouthism, in a short tract on “The Coming of Our Lord,” I propose, in the following pages, to examine the optimism of Swedenborgianism.

Our age is an age of extremes; some well-known truth of Christianity is seized upon by zealous people, placed under a spiritual microscope, and exaggerated into a perfect caricature of its true self.

WEST FLAMBORO', 15th February, 1889.

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## SWEDENBORG ON THE SPIRITUAL SENSE OF HOLY SCRIPTURE.

THE whole system of Swedenborg is built up on the mode of Scripture interpretation which he upholds. The foundation of all his works is the spiritual interpretation of Scripture according to the law of correspondences, which he uses. This is quite clear, on an examination of his works. The "Arcana Coelestia" is the grand monument of his labors in this especial direction.

We have not undertaken an examination of this subject; because we altogether differ from Swedenborg in all his deductions from Holy Scripture. Had Swedenborg claimed that he had, by an ordinary (in contradistinction to an extraordinary) inspiration, gleaned the inner meaning of Holy Scripture, by the aid of God, and that he was fully convinced of the general correctness of his interpretation, we should then have been at liberty to go to his works, take that which commended itself to our own spiritual perception, and leave the rest.

But for those who believe that the mission of Swedenborg was divine in an extraordinary sense, this mode of treating his writings is quite impossible.

He makes a stupendous claim in the following words: "Since the Lord cannot manifest Himself in person to the world, which has just been shown to be impossible, and yet He has foretold He would come and establish a new Church, which is the New Jerusalem, it follows He will effect this by the instrumentality of a man, who is able, not only to

receive the doctrines of that Church into his understanding, but also to make them known by the press. That the Lord manifested Himself before me, His servant, that He sent me on this office, and afterwards opened the sight of my spirit, and so let me into the spiritual world, permitting me to see the heavens and the hells, and to converse with angels and spirits, and this now continually for many years, I attest the truth; and, further, from the first day of my call to this office, I have never received anything relating to the doctrines of that Church from any angel, but from the Lord alone, while I was reading the Word ("True Christian Religion," sec. 779): "After this work was finished, the Lord called together His twelve disciples, who followed Him in this world, and the next day He sent them throughout the Spiritual World, to preach the Gospel, that the Lord God, Jesus Christ, reigneth; whose kingdom shall endure for ever and ever, according to the prophecy in Daniel (vii. 13, 14), and in Revelations (xi. 15), and that blessed are those that are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb (Rev. xix. 19). This was done on the 19th day of June, in the year 1770." (Memorandum—"True Christian Religion," sec. 791).

Any one firmly convinced of the literal truth of this (for I suppose we are not at liberty to give a spiritual meaning to Swedenborg), must accept the works of Swedenborg on the Holy Scripture as a divine revelation of the inner meaning of Scripture, from which there can be no more appeal than there would be for a devout Roman Catholic from a formulated sentence of the Pope uttered *ex-cathedra*. Every supernatural vision of Swedenborg, although doctrine may not be deduced from it, becomes, nevertheless, the extraordinary seal of the truth of his doctrinal system.

As this claim is so stupendous a one, let us pass on to an

examination of chapter vii. in his work, "The True Christian Religion." It is headed, "The Sacred Scripture, or the Word of the Lord," and contains the germ of the whole body of doctrine of "The New Church."

I. "That the Sacred Scripture or the Word is the divine truth itself. It is universally confessed that the Word is from God, is divinely inspired, and of consequence holy, and still it has, to this day, remained a secret in what part of the Word its divinity resides, for in the letter it appears, like common writings, composed in a strange style" (Sec. 189).

II. "That in the Word there is a spiritual sense heretofore unknown. The Word has a spiritual sense which is within the natural sense, just as the soul is within the body . . . but that such a spiritual sense is contained within the natural sense, has never, heretofore, entered into the conception of any person on earth" (Sec. 193).

"It is owing to the spiritual sense that the Word is divinely inspired, and holy in every syllable." (Sec. 200).

"That the spiritual sense of the Word has, heretofore, remained unknown" (Sec. 201).

We are, indeed, afterwards told that the knowledge of "correspondences" was well known to many in very ancient times—to Enoch, to the inhabitants of "Canaan, Egypt, Assyria, Chaldea, Syria, Arabia, Tyre, Sidon and Nineveh, and from thence it was conveyed into Greece, where it was changed into fable, as may appear from the works of the oldest writers of that country" (Sec. 202).

Swedenborg is quite clear that, in his opinion, no such knowledge ever existed among members of the early Church. "The reason why the science of correspondences, which is the key to the spiritual sense of the Word, is now revealed is because the divine truths of the Church are now coming

to light, and of these the spiritual sense of the Word consists" (Sec. 207).

"There are three heavens, the highest, the middle, and the lowest. . . . In like manner as there are three heavens, so there are three senses of the Word, the celestial, the spiritual, and the natural. . . . Hence appears the true nature and quality of the Word, viz., that in its literal sense, which is natural, there is contained an interior sense, which is spiritual, and in this an innermost sense, which is celestial" (Sec. 212). All this, when proclaimed by Swedenborg, was of the nature of a divine revelation, as although the key to all this kind of knowledge, the "law of correspondences" had once been possessed by man, it had been lost long ages before Swedenborg wrote, and had never been possessed by the Christian Church at all. However, the Lord having come, the new dispensation was inaugurated by means of this spiritual knowledge.

It is but right that the assertions of any one claiming to inaugurate a new dispensation should be jealously examined. We shall make an attempt in the following chapters to sketch out our own line of thought, after an honest examination of that which lies at the foundation of the whole Swedenborgian system, viz., "Swedenborg's mode of Scripture interpretation."

#### MODES OF ALLEGORICAL INTERPRETATION.

After an examination of Swedenborg's mode of Scripture interpretation, it was but natural that our mind reverted to similar modes in vogue long ago, the spirit of which lives in many schools of thought in the Christian Church of to-day. First, there is the most extensive of the Jewish modes, contained in the "Midrash Rabba," an old Jewish exposition of the greater part of the Old Testament. It gives a four-fold interpretation of the Divine Word :

*Peshat*, or, The Literal Sense.

*Remez*, or, The Latent Meaning.

*Darush*, or, Allegorical Meaning.

*Sôd*, or, Mysterious Meaning.

The Jewish Mishnic doctors distinguished between the letter of Holy Scripture, which they called the "body," and the mystic or celestial sense, which they called the "soul" (See Farrar's "Bampton Lectures," 1885, pp. 95, 139).

At the time of our Lord's life on earth, lived one of the most celebrated of Jews, Philo of Alexandria, in Egypt. He was of the priestly family, and one of the great expositors of the meaning of the Holy Scriptures. We have several volumes of his writings. His mode of interpreting them he lays down over and over again. "It is worth while," he says, "having thus explained the literal account given to us of these events, to proceed to explain also the inner meaning concealed under this account" (Philo, "On Joseph," sec. vi.). He then proceeds to give the spiritual sense of the history of Joseph—we will have occasion to examine a few samples of his style later on. Philo, like Swedenborg, claims to have been supernaturally inspired (See Philo, "De Cherubim," sec. 9). When we examine the writings we still possess of the early Christians, we find many of them advocating the same mode of Scripture interpretation as Swedenborg.

First, we will take Barnabas, who wrote an epistle during (or within a year or two of) 100 A.D. He says: "Now, wherefore did Moses say: 'Thou shalt not eat of the swine, nor the eagle, nor the hawk, nor the raven; nor of any fish that is not possessed of scales?'" He embraced three doctrines in his mind in doing so. Moreover, the Lord said unto them in Deuteronomy: "And I will establish My

ordinances among this people." Is there not a command of God that they should not eat of these things? That is, "But Moses spoke with a spiritual reference?" (Epistle of Barnabas, ch. x.). He then goes on to give the spiritual meaning, which we shall refer to again.

We next turn to the two great Christian writers, who belonged to the Alexandrian school of thought. The peculiarity of this school was, that they carried the spiritual interpretation of Holy Scripture to the furthest extreme. Their motto was: "Unless you believe, ye shall not understand."

We will first glance at Clement of Alexandria, who wrote his "Stromata" about 193 A.D. He says:

"The sense of the law is to be taken in three ways . . . but I well know it belongs to a perfect man to distinguish and declare these things. For the whole Scripture is not in its meaning, a single Myconos as the proverbial expression has it" (Clement of Alexandria, "Stromata," B. I., ch. xxviii.). "For many reasons, the Scriptures hides the sense . . . some look at the 'body' of Scripture—the expression and the names—as to the body of Moses; while others look through to the inner thoughts and what is signified by the names, seeking the Moses that is with the angels" (Clement of Alexandria, "Stromata," Bk. VI., ch. xv.). This last quotation occurs in a chapter headed, 'Reasons for the meanings of Scripture being veiled.'

Now we may turn to the celebrated Origen of Alexandria.

He wrote from 230-254 A.D. He was a pupil of Clement, just quoted, and was the first man in the Christian Church who formulated this mode of interpretation into a regular system. His writings embrace immense quantities of matter. His "Commentaries on Scripture," of which we still possess considerable portions, give the spiritual sense, and is the

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great storehouse from which the great majority agreeing with him as to the true mode of interpretation have drawn. His enormous work, called the "Hexapla," or six-columned Bible, in nearly sixty huge volumes, was one of the greatest works of ancient or modern times, undertaken for the preservation of a correct text of the Sacred Scriptures. It was placed in the Great Library at Casarea, and was, in all probability, burned by the Mohammedan Arabs when they captured the place in 653 A.D.

In one of his many works, "De Principiis," Bk. IV., he treats of Holy Scripture and the proper mode of understanding it. He begins the first chapter by proving "That the Scriptures are divinely inspired," and then continues: "Having spoken thus briefly on the subject of the divine inspiration of the Holy Scriptures, it is necessary to proceed to the consideration of the manner in which they are to be read and understood; seeing numerous errors have been committed in consequence of the method in which the holy documents ought to be examined, not having been understood by the multitude" (Bk. IV., ch. 8). "Now, the cause in all the points previously enumerated, of the false opinions and impious statements, or ignorant assertions about God, appears to be nothing else than the not understanding the Scriptures according to its spiritual sense; but the interpretation of it according to the mere letter" (Bk. IV., ch. 9). "The individual, then, ought to portray the ideas of Holy Scripture in a threefold manner upon his own soul, in order that the simple man may be edified by the 'flesh,' as it were, of Scripture, for so we name the obvious sense; while he who has ascended a certain way may be edified by the 'soul,' as it were. The perfect man, again . . . may receive edification from the 'spiritual' law . . . for, as a man consists of 'body,' 'soul' and 'spirit,' so, in

the same way, does Scripture, which has been arranged to be given by God for the salvation of man" (Bk. IV., ch. 11). "This being the case, we have to sketch what appears to us to be the marks of the true understanding of Scripture. And, in the first place, this must be pointed out, that the object of the Spirit, by the Providence of God, through the Word, who was in the beginning with God, illuminated the servants of truth, the prophets and apostles, was especially the communication of ineffable mysteries regarding the affairs of mēn (now, by men, I mean those souls who make use of bodies), in order that he who is capable of instruction may, by investigation, and by devoting himself to the study of the profundities of meanings contained in the words, become a sharer in all the doctrines of his council" (Bk. IV., ch. 14). Having made an examination of the Old Testament, he begins with the New, as follows: "And, if we go to the Gospels and institute a similar examination, what would be more irrational than to take literally the injunction: 'Salute no man by the way,' which simple people imagine the Saviour enjoined on the Apostles. The command, moreover, that the *right* cheek should be smitten, is most incredible, since everyone who strikes, unless he happen to have some bodily defect, smites the *left* cheek with the *right* hand." (Bk. IV., ch. 18).

Much, very much, more might be quoted; but enough has now been brought forward to show that Philo, the Jew, and in the early Church, at least three men (there were really many more) were not quite so "simple," in this matter, as Swedenborg would appear to have represented them.

This knowledge was, of course, the first blow to any advance, on our part, toward belief in Swedenborg's tremendous claim, as under God, the inaugurator of a new

dispensation, however ready we may be to acknowledge the great beauty and truth of very much that Swedenborg has written.

The fact that first presented itself to us then, was that Swedenborg undoubtedly brings forward an idea as to the way Scripture should be interpreted, as something altogether new, unknown before, or if known (for he is not quite clear here) ages before, yet entirely lost long, long before he wrote; but we find that the knowledge of this same idea existed in the early Church, and we know from experience, that among readers of early Christian writers, it has never been lost. This of course was an insuperable obstacle across the road toward belief in the supernatural mission of Swedenborg.

#### THE KEY OF CORRESPONDENCES.

If we find differences between these men (viz.: Philo, Barnabas, Clement, Origen and Swedenborg) in their interpretation of any passage, whose version are we to take? Can we use our own judgment? Certainly we can, if we sit in judgment upon their conclusions. But if we believe any one of them to have been infallibly guided by God, we must pocket our private judgment. For myself, believing that all men who write the truth, are (in a certain sense) inspired while writing *truth*, and also believing that these five men, were possessed only of this kind of inspiration, I approach their conclusions with a perfectly free judgment, prepared to examine their writings, taking what commends itself to me, and leaving the rest.

Let us now turn again to Philo for a few examples of his interpretation. Philo says on the eighth verse of the second chapter of Genesis, "The word *paradise*, taken literally, has no need of any particular explanation, for it means a place

thickly crowded with trees of every kind ; but symbolically taken it means wisdom and knowledge, both divine and human, and the proper comprehension of all the causes of things, and since it was not possible for man to behold nature herself, nor properly to praise the Creator of the universe without wisdom, therefore the Creator planted an outline of it in the rational soul of the first and principal guide of man, namely, the *mind*, as He is said to have planted trees in the garden " ("Questions and Solutions," No. 6). On this account he assigned a most suitable place for Paradise, called Eden, an emblem of the soul which sees right things, and rejoices in them ("About the planting of Noah," sec. 9). "And the statement is, that the Paradise was in the east, for folly is a thing of darkness and setting, and which brings in the night, but wisdom is a most brilliant thing, radiant all around, and in the truest sense of the word rising" (Sec. 10 of the same). "By the tree of life is indicated the best of all virtues of man, piety" ("Questions and Solutions," No. 10). "What is meant under this figure (the tree of the knowledge of good and evil) is prudence, which is the comprehension of science by which all things are known, and distinguished one from the other." By comparing all this with "Arcana Cœlestia" on the same texts, and making allowance for the fact that Philo has been translated from the Greek, and Swedenborg from the Latin, and, therefore, that the virtues and vices may not appear under exactly the same names, it will be found that in the main they agree.

Let us again turn to Philo. "God is in the heaven above and in the earth beneath." Let no one suppose that God is here spoken of according to His essence, for the living God contains everything ; but what is meant is that His power, according to which He made, and arranged, and established the universe, is both in heaven and earth, and

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this, to speak correctly, is goodness" (On "The Migration of Abraham," ch. xxxii.). "And Moses speaks thus, 'And they gave to Jacob the foreign gods which were in their hands, and the earrings which were in their ears, and Jacob hid them under the turpentine tree which was in Shechem.' These were the gods of the wicked, but Jacob is not said to have taken them, but to have hid and destroyed them, for the virtuous man will take nothing from wickedness for his own advantage, just as Abraham tells the King of Sodom, when he was proposing to give him things of irrational nature in exchange for rational animals, namely, horses in exchange for men, that he would take nothing that belonged to him, but that he would stretch out 'the action of his soul,' which, speaking symbolically, he calls 'his hand,' to the most high God, 'in order that the king might never say he made the discerning man' (the man of perception), namely, Abraham, rich, exchanging poverty for wealthy virtue." The passions are always concealed and guarded in Shechem ("Allegories of the Sacred Laws," ch. viii.).

"Each individual then among us is the son of life, according to the outward sense, which is called Meshech, honoring and admiring (Deut. xxi. 15) the foster-mother and nurse of the mortal race, namely, the outward sense, whom also, when the earthly mind, by name Adam, saw after it had been created, he named her life, his own death; for, says the Scripture, 'Adam called his wife's name Eve (*ἔωϊ*), because she was the mother of all living,' that is to say, of those in real truth, dead as to the life of the natural man; but they who really live have wisdom for their mother, and the outward senses for their slave, which has been given by nature for the purpose of ministering to knowledge; and the name of the man who was born of life, whom we have

recognized by a kiss, he calls Damascus, which name being interpreted means 'the blood of a sack,' by this figure, calling the body a sack, with great power and felicity; and by blood, he means the life" (On "Who is the Heir of Divine Things," ch. xi.). "God has implanted in the mind a power of comprehending that world which is appreciable only by the intellect, by its own power, but the invisible world by means of the external senses. And if any man be able in all his parts to live to God rather than to himself, looking by means of the external senses into those things which are their proper objects, for the sake of finding out the truth: and through the medium of the soul, investigating in a philosophical spirit the proper objects of intelligence, and those things which have a real existence, and by means of the voice singing hymns in praise of the world and its Creator, he will have a happy life (On "Who is Heir of Divine Things," ch. xxii.).

"Omer is the tenth part of three measures" (Ex. xvi. 36). "In men there are three measures: the outward senses, and speech, and mind. The outward sense being the measure of the objects of the outward sense; speech being the measure of nouns, verbs, and whatever is uttered; and the mind being the measure of those things which can be perceived by the intellect. We must, therefore, offer first-fruits of each of these three measures as a sacred tenth" (On "Seeking Instruction," ch. xviii.).

I will only give one more quotation from Philo; I would it were possible to give an idea of the subject without so many lengthy quotations, but it would be impossible. "Now at the beginning of our existence, our soul dwelt among the passions alone, and had as its foster-brethren, griefs, pains, fears, desires, and pleasures, which reach us through the medium of the outer senses, before reason was as yet able to

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see good and evil, and to distinguish accurately the points in which these things differ, the one from the other, but it was still wavering and hesitating, and as it were closing its eyes in profound sleep; but as the time advances, when advancing out of the age of infancy, we are on the point of becoming young men, then, without delay, the double trunk of virtue and wickedness springs up within us out of one root, and we attain to the comprehension of them both; but still we choose one of the two, those who are well disposed choosing virtue, and those of the contrary character choosing wickedness. These things now, being previously sketched out in this manner, we must then be aware that Egypt is the symbol of the passions" (external man) "and the land of Canaan (here) the emblem of wickedness, for man at his earliest birth had the Egyptian passions" (perceptions of sense) "to dwell among, being deeply rooted in mere pleasures and pains," etc., etc. ("On Seeking Instruction," ch. xv.). Of course, to show that Swedenborg and Philo are both alike in the main wards of their keys of correspondences it would be necessary to quote the whole voluminous works of Philo, but I have now given enough for the inquiring mind to see the similarity. One thing may be said, Philo is Swedenborg's superior in ability (or willingness) to give the substance of what he has to say in few words, in striking contrast to Swedenborg's lengthy reiterations of the same things throughout huge volumes.

### THREE ALLEGORICAL WRITERS OF THE PRIMITIVE CHURCH—BARNABAS, CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA, AND ORIGEN.

I shall simply, as far as Barnabas is concerned, give a few quotations, as samples of his mode of treating Holy Scripture. We have seen his views in the matter of Scrip-

ture interpretation ; it only remains to examine in a passage or two how he uses his key. "Neither shalt thou eat," says Moses, 'the eagle, nor the hawk, nor the kite, nor the raven.' Thou shalt not join thyself, he means, to such men as know not how to procure food for themselves by labor and sweat, but seize upon that of others in their iniquity ; and, although wearing an aspect of simplicity, are on the watch to plunder others in their iniquity. So these birds, while they sit idle, inquire how they may devour the flesh of others, proving themselves pests to all in their wickedness" (Ep. of Barnabas, ch. x.). "Moses then issued three doctrines concerning meats, with a spiritual significance, but they received them according to fleshly desire, as if they were spoken of literal meats. David, however, comprehends the knowledge of the three doctrines, and speaks in like manner : 'Blessed is the man who hath not walked in the counsel of the ungodly,' even as the fishes referred to (the lumprey, polypus and cuttlefish), which go in darkness to the depth of the sea, 'and have not stood the way of sinners,' even as they go astray ; 'and hath not sat in the seat of the scorers,' even as those birds which lie in wait for prey" (Ep. Barnabas, ch. x.). Speaking of the command to eat animals which chew the 'cud, as he says : "What, then, does it, mean ? That we do not join ourselves to those who fear the Lord, who do not have upon their commandment in their hearts, who utter the judgments of the Lord, and obey them, and who know that meditation is a work of gladness, and who *ruminate* upon the word of the Lord" (Barnabas Ep., ch. x.).

We may now turn and examine the style of Clement of Alexandria. He is largely employed in trying to prove that Greek mythology, in its "inner" meaning, taught many of those truths which we have in the "inner"

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meaning of Holy Scripture. He goes much further than Swedenborg. Swedenborg tells us the "law of correspondences" found its way into Greece, and there degenerated into fable, "as we may see in the earliest writers of that country" (See passage quoted from "True Christian Religion," above). Clement goes to great pains in examining many of the Greek writers, and tries to glean the inner meanings of the fables; he is thus occupied in the greater part of his great work, the "Stromata."

Clement borrows largely from Philo; for instance, he repeats Philo's explanation of Abraham's change of name, but does not notice Sarah's change of name also, as Philo does: "Abraham prosecuting the lofty philosophy of aerial phenomena, and the sublime philosophy of the movements of the heavenly bodies, was called Abram, which is interpreted 'sublime father.' But afterwards, on looking up to heaven, where he saw the Son in Spirit, as some explain, a glorified angel, or in some way recognized God to be superior to the creation, and all the order in it; he receives in addition the letter 'Alpha,' the knowledge of the one and only God, and is called 'Abraham,' having instead of a natural philosopher become wise, and a lover of God. For it is interpreted, 'Elect father of sound.' For by sound is the uttered word: the mind is its father, and the mind of the good man is elect" (Clement, Alex., "Stromata," Bk. V., ch. i.). Swedenborg, after telling us a piece of paper was sent down from heaven to him, says the angels explained the spiritual meaning of the Hebrew letters upon it: "They explained their signification both separately and conjointly, telling me the letter H, which was added to the names of Abraham and Sarai, signified the Infinite and Eternal" ("True Christian Religion," sec. 278).

Philo and Clement, who both used the Greek (LXX.)

version of the Old Testament, speak of the added letter as "Alpha," we find it H (I suppose for English readers) in "True Christian Religion."

By all three, Philo, Clement and Swedenborg, it is made to mean God, or the knowledge of God; the Infinite and Eternal. We will now take a quotation from Clement, in which he is speaking of Baptism, and see how he treats it:

"Wherefore, thus saith the Lord, every alien son is uncircumcised in heart and flesh (that is unclean in body and soul), there shall not enter one of the strangers into the midst of the house of Israel but the Levites (Ex. xliv. 9, 10). He calls those who would not believe, but disbelieve, strangers. Only those who live purely are the priests of God. Wherefore, of all the circumcised tribes, those anointed to be high priests, and kings, and prophets, were reckoned holy. Whence He commands them not to touch dead bodies or approach the dead, not that the *body* was polluted, but that sin and disobedience were incarnate and embodied and dead, and therefore abominable. It was only, then, when a father or mother, a son or daughter died, that the priest was allowed to enter, because these were related only by flesh and seed, to whom the priest was indebted for the immediate cause of his entrance into life. . . . 'Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return there' says Job; not naked of possessions, for that were a trivial and common thing; but as a just man, he departs naked of evil and sin, and of the unsightly shape of those who lead bad lives. For this was what was said: 'Unless ye be converted and become as children,' pure in flesh and holy in soul, by abstinence from evil deeds, showing that He would have us to be such as also He generated us from our mother—the water (baptism). For the intent of one generation (baptism) succeeding another (birth), is to

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immortalize by progress. 'But the lamp of the wicked shall be put out.' That purity of body and soul which the wise man partakes of, the wise Moses indicated by employing repetition in describing the incorruptibility of body and soul in the person of Rebecca thus: 'Now the virgin was fair, and man had not known her.' And Rebecca, interpreted, means 'Glory of God,' and the 'Glory of God' is immortality. This is in reality righteousness, not to desire other things; but to be entirely the consecrated temple of the Lord. Righteousness is peace of life and well-conditioned state, to which the Lord dismissed her when he said, 'Depart in peace.' . . . But we must pass from physics to ethics, which are clearer. . . . The Saviour Himself then plainly initiates us into mysteries, according to the words of the tragedy (Euripides, *Bacchæ*):

" 'Seeing those who see, He also gives the orgies.'

But if you ask:

" 'Those orgies, what is their nature?'

You will hear again:

" 'It is forbidden to mortals uninitiated into the Bacchic rites to know.'

But if any one will inquire curiously what they are, let him hear:

" 'It is not lawful for thee to hear, but they are worth the knowing, The rites of the God detest him who practises impiety.'

Now, God is without beginning, is the perfect beginning of the universe, and the producer of the beginning. As then He is Being, He is the First Principle of the

department of action; as He is Good, of morals; as He is Mind, He is the First Principle of reason and judgment. Whence He is alone the Teacher, who is the only Son of the Most High Father, the Instructor of men" (Clement of Alexandria, "Stromata," Bk. V., ch. xxv.).

Here Baptism is—first, Purification; second, Regeneration; third, Initiation into the knowledge of God.

Swedenborg's order is in "True Christian Religion," ch. xii.

II. "That the washing which is called Baptism signifies spiritual washing, which is purification from evil and foulness, and thus regeneration.

IV. "That the first use of Baptism is introduction into the Christian Church, and at the same time insertion among Christians in the spiritual world.

V. "That the second use of Baptism is that the Christian may know and acknowledge the Lord Jesus Christ the Redeemer and Saviour, and may follow Him."

Here we have—first, Purification; and thence Regeneration; second, Initiation; and third, Admission into the knowledge of God, that we may follow Christ. There is very little difference in the order.

We may now quote a short sentence from Clement, to show his view of the spiritual significance of meats, etc.: "Thus in many ways the Word is figuratively described, as meat, and flesh, and food, and bread, and blood, and milk. The Lord is all these to give enjoyment to those who believe in Him. Let no man think it strange when we say that the Lord's blood is figuratively represented as milk. For is it not figuratively represented as wine? 'Who washes' he says, 'His garments in wine, and His robe in the blood of the grape' . . . . . and that the blood is the Word, is testified by the blood of Abel, the righteous, interceding

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with God. For the blood had never uttered a voice, had it not been regarded as the Word, for the righteous man of old (Abel) is a type of the new righteous man (Christ); and the blood, which of old interceded, intercedes in place of the new blood. The blood, that is, the Word, cries to God," etc., etc. (Clement, Alex., "The Instructor," Bk. I., ch. vi.).

According to Swedenborg, flesh and blood signify spiritual good and truth (Secs. 705, 709), blood signifies the divine truth of the Lord, which is also divine truth of the Word, (Secs. 706, 730). "When men think of the Lord's blood, the angels perceive the divine truth of the Word" (Sec. 706). The quotations are from "The True Christian Religion." Making allowance for mere differences of words, Swedenborg and Clement use the same key. By-the-by, the point made by Clement about the blood of Abel uttering a voice, and so proving itself the type of "The Word," is a point I have not come across yet in Swedenborg.

It is about time we now turned to Origen. From his voluminous writings we will only take a few passages, merely to illustrate our subject, and to show there is very little really "new" under heaven.

"The outer darkness is, in my judgment, to be understood not so much of some dark atmosphere without any light, as of those persons who, being plunged in the darkness of profound ignorance, have been placed beyond the reach of the light of the understanding; . . . the wicked also who, in this life, have loved the darkness of error, and the night of ignorance, may be clothed with some dark bodies after the resurrection, that the very mist of ignorance which had, in this life, taken possession of their minds within, may appear in the future as the external covering of the body" (Origen, "De Principiis," Bk. I., ch. x.). "Certain persons, then refusing the labor

of thinking, and adopting a superficial view of the letter of the law, and yielding rather, in some measure, to the indulgence of their own desires and lusts, being disciples of the letter alone, are of opinion that the fulfilment of the promises of the future are to be looked for in bodily pleasures and luxury; and, therefore, they especially desire to have again, after the resurrection, such bodily structures as may never be without the power of eating and drinking, and performing all the functions of flesh and blood, not following the opinions of the Apostle Paul regarding the resurrection of a spiritual body; . . . . . those, therefore, who receive the representations of Scripture, according to the understanding of the apostles, entertain the hope that the saints will eat indeed; but that it will be the bread of life, which will nourish the soul with the food of truth and wisdom, and enlighten the mind, and cause it to drink from the cup of wisdom. . . . . By this food of wisdom, the understanding being nourished to an entire and perfect condition like that in which man was made at the beginning, he is restored to the image and likeness of God; so that although an individual may depart from this life less perfectly instructed, but has done works approved of, he will be capable of receiving instruction in Jerusalem, the City of Saints; *i.e.*, he will be educated and moulded, and made a living stone, a stone elect and precious, because he has undergone with firmness and constancy the struggles of life and trials of piety, and will there come to a truer and dearer knowledge. . . . . And they also are to be understood as princes and rulers, who both govern them of lower rank, and instruct them, and teach them, and train them to divine things. . . . . If any one, indeed, pure in heart, and holy in mind, and more practised in perception, he will, by making more rapid progress, quickly

ascend, and reach the kingdom of heaven through those mansions, so to speak, in various places, which the Greeks call spheres, *i.e.*, globes, but which Holy Scripture has called heavens, in which each will clearly see what is done there, and, in the second place, will discover the reason why things are done; and he will pass through all gradations.

When, then, the saints have reached the celestial abode, they will clearly see the nature of the stars. . . . And in all things this food is to be understood as the contemplation and understanding of God, . . . and this, it is proper, should be observed by every one of those who are beginning to see God, *i.e.*, to understand Him through purity of heart" (Origen, "De Principiis," Bk. II., chs. ii.-vii.).

It would be impossible to give the whole of Origen on this matter; he did the best he could from the astronomical aspect, with the knowledge possessed about it in his day. Had knowledge of astronomy advanced in his day to the point it had in Swedenborg's time, he might have done better. Two new planets have been discovered during the last hundred years, of which Swedenborg never speaks, so we may have further revelation as regards them now modern science has discovered them.

Swedenborg tells us Saturn is the outermost planet of the solar system; modern science has discovered two beyond, Herschel and Neptune; it will now be in order for some one to converse with spirits from these worlds.

\* We have now completed our examination of ancient writers, for it would be quite beyond our space to quote from the countless numbers of records of supernatural and spiritual visions of the first few centuries. We see in Swedenborg's works an elaborate, formulated system (quite different in style from that of Holy Scripture itself), and

when we first read it, our mind reverted (as each idea was unfolded) to some ancient writer who had propounded the same thing. By our quotations from Philo, Barnabas, Clément, and Origen, we by no means intend it to be inferred that the conceptions of these men agree in every particular with those of Swedenborg, but that there is so great a similarity between them and Swedenborg, especially in leading ideas, that to us, Swedenborg seems to have formulated into a vast and complicated system, backed and supported (if not by miracles) by what he calls "memorable relations," many of the ideas found floating about, just before, during, and for some time after, the birth of our Lord; Alexandria being the home of these interesting systems.

#### OTHER USES OF THE ALLEGORICAL METHOD.

We may all thank God that the great cardinal truths of Holy Scripture are easily grasped by the man of spiritual perceptions, and a mind actually guided in daily life by faith, hope, and charity, is, in true spiritual wisdom, far in advance of the mind filled to the brim with allegorical meanings, the grasping of which is, after all, a matter of mental acuteness to a great extent; and it by no means follows that the man mentally acute enough to grasp a system of allegorical interpretation is a *good* man. After wading through the huge allegorical systems of ancient Judaism, of Aristobulus (from whom Philo largely borrows, without giving him any credit), of Philo, Barnabas, Clément, and Origen, then tracing the same thing in Hilary, Ambrose, and Augustine, we come at last to the whole thing run riot, in the huge dictionary of the spiritual sense, by Eucherius. With this book before him, a man may read the letter of his Bible and get three or four Bibles out of it.

Early Christians did not feel compelled to remain with "the key of correspondences," used by Clément or Origen,

undeveloped ; (if this system be not kept within very strict bounds, it always shows a fatal tendency to run to seed.) It is, indeed, a progressive system. If the so-called new Church is to be built up on the allegorical system, the old ecclesiastical system of the Middle Ages was built up by the same method also.

Let us see how this was done, by a quotation from Farrar's "Bampton Lectures" (1885).

"The allegorical methods," he says, "filtered down, down to the schoolmen (*i.e.*, theologians of the Middle Ages), through the Alexandrians and the Fathers, and were, unfortunately, perpetuated by the authority of Jerome and Augustine. Origen was, as we have seen, the earliest to develop the conception that the Scripture was written with a triple meaning: the Latin Fathers had separated his 'spiritual sense' into allegoric and anagogic. A favorite illustration of this fourfold sense was the word 'Jerusalem,' which might stand for a city, for a faithful soul, for the Church militant, or for the Church triumphant. Another was the word 'water,' which literally means an element; tropologically, may stand for sorrow, or wisdom, or heresies, or prosperity; allegorically, may refer to baptism, nations, or grace; anagogically, to eternal happiness. 'Light,' again, was another illustrative word. Thomas Aquinas tells us that 'Let there be light' may mean, historically, an act of creation; allegorically, 'let Christ be love;' anagogically, 'may we be led by Christ to glory;' and tropologically, 'may we be mentally illumined by Christ.' . . . Hugh of St. Cher, and others, compare these four meanings to the four coverings of the tabernacle; the four colors of the veil of the tabernacle, to the four winds; to the fourfold cherubim, the four rivers of Paradise. . . . Not content even with a fourfold sense, Bonaventura and others contented for sevenfold, or even eightfold, senses. . . .

But the system, besides saving trouble of much study, was advantageous to hierarchic usurpations" (Pages 294-296).

By reading the few following pages of this lecture of Farrar's, it will be seen how, with this system, the whole fabric of error was built up during the Middle Ages. Swedenborg's "True Christian Religion" was published in 1770, A.D. In 1777, a book was published called "Samson's Hair, an Eminent Representation of the Church of God." "Some (says the writer) may object that the hair of a man's head is a mean thing to represent so great and glorious a thing as the Church of Christ. To which I answer, 'Glory over me, thou infidelity, thou first-born of the devil, if thou canst.'" (Page 299.)

#### A NOTE ON

#### SWEDENBORGIANISM SINCE THE DEATH OF ITS FOUNDER.

The title of a book written by an evidently sincere advocate for the supernatural and extraordinary mission of Swedenborg, is "Swedenborg verified by the progress of the past hundred years." This book may be taken as an outline of what is being said for the system by its modern advocates. The writer dwells only upon the darkest spots in the centuries from 325 A.D. (the year of the Council of Nice) to the advent of Swedenborg, contrasting them with the progress and enlightenment of the last hundred years, which, of course, he portrays in the brightest colors. He carefully notes the beginning of Negro slavery before the bright era, but he does not mention that during these very dark ages one of the most wonderful and beneficial social reformations took place (gradually), which has ever been effected by religion. It was during these very dark centuries the huge system of European slavery was gradually abolished by the influence of the spirit of Christianity.

He also forgets to mention that the two eggs from which all our modern liberty and progress have been hatched, were laid during these dark times—the Magna Charta of English Political Liberty and the Habeas Corpus Act, the guarantee of British Personal Liberty. Of course, having made up his mind as to the mission of Swedenborg, he has a case to substantiate, so he (probably unconsciously) avoids all truth which would conflict with the final triumph of his argument. The Book of Revelations (xx. and xxi.) presents a lovely picture by means of grand symbols. The outlines are quite clear. "An angel descends from heaven having the keys of the abyss, and a chain on his hand; he lays hold on Satan, casts him into the abyss, locks and seals the mouth; a lengthy period then ensues (called a thousand years), during which Christ and His saints reign; then the nations will make a final attack on the kingdom of righteousness, when they will be defeated, after which the New Jerusalem will descend." The state of the world to-day does not seem to warrant us in supposing that the New Jerusalem has descended, but many devout Christians imaging the period generally called the Millennium to have commenced. However this may be, the duty of every Christian is clear, viz., to make this world a better, happier and purer place by the grace of God.

Another point he touches upon is marriage. Under this head he attacks ordinary Christian ideas on the subject as represented in the Church of England Marriage Service, of which he says: "The Church of England has a very coarse tone in its service." Knowing how that service begins with a plainly worded warning against a carnal or coarse estimate of marriage, we were at first astonished at the charge, but remembering how Swedenborg's "Conjugal Love" has been accused of the same thing, we saw at once it was simply the "So are you" kind of argument. Considering that the fact

that what Swedenborg so often dwells upon, namely, that marriage is the symbol of the union between Christ and the soul, and His spouse the Church, is so clearly stated in that service, no one knowing Swedenborg's works could honestly imagine Swedenborg himself writing in this manner. The fact is that the sectarian spirit is getting the better of Swedenborg's followers, as the above charge clearly proves.

One of the most striking proofs of our Lord's divinity, is the infinite superiority of His moral teaching, over the state of the world at its best in His day. The moral code of our Lord is unique in its grand and uncompromising perfection. But in Swedenborg's "Conjugal Love," we find the assertion of such a code of morals as was in vogue in 1770 A.D. among well-disposed men, with a dash of what the world esteems honor. His observations on the spiritual aspect of marriage are some of them beautiful and excellent, but when he begins to deal with *practice*, he is exceedingly accommodating.

For instance, he allows of concubinage for the following reasons, of which the man himself is to be the judge: Having no natural affection towards the children, intemperance, a desire of divulging family secrets, of doing evil, stealing, internal dissimilitude, advanced age on the part of the wife ("Conjugal Love," secs. 472, 473). With this list to choose from, a wealthy man would never be at a loss; so we are not at all surprised to find him telling us that in conversation with kings in the spiritual world, he found out concubinage was in some case excusable, ("Conjugal Love," sec. 475). Charles II. of England would be good authority on such a subject!!!!

#### SWEDENBORG ON THE PERSON OF OUR LORD.

There is only one more point in Swedenborg's works which we shall touch upon, and that is the idea of the person of

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our Lord. We approach this solemn subject with all reverence, quite conscious of the many difficulties that surround it. Swedenborg very rightly observes, that the Divine Being or Esse, "cannot be described in human language, since it transcends every idea of human thought, for human thought can comprehend nothing but what is created and finite, and not what is uncreated and infinite, consequently it can form no conception of the Divine Esse." ("True Religion," sec. 18). Next, when we turn to the best exposition of Swedenborg's system, viz., "Noble's Appeal," we find the same acknowledgment; speaking of the Trinity he says: "It must then be a Trinity of Essential Principles—of Constituent Elements (so to speak for want of better terms) forming together One Person" (p. 354). We find, unfortunately, even after the above admission a great amount of covert sarcasm in Swedenborg's works regarding the use by the Christian Church of the word "Mystery" as applied to the Trinity. Here is a practical acknowledgment that any attempt to explain the Divine Being must end in "mystery." The Western Church has used the word "Persons," but all her best divines have said about the use of this word just what Mr. Noble says about the use of the words "Constituent Elements" and "Essential Principles," viz., that it is used "for want of a better term." We now pass on to the consideration of the insuperable barrier which prevents us accepting Swedenborg's doctrine of the Person of Christ.

Swedenborg has cleared his ground for the statement of his doctrine, by propounding Philo's doctrine as to the origin of soul in man. According to Philo, man is the internal principle, and woman is the external principle, the father then is the exclusive origin of the soul of man, the mother contributing nothing but the "body," or tabernacle, of the soul

(see Philo. Vol. I., p. 92). Swedenborg applies this (supposed) universal law to the incarnation of our Lord as follows: "That these three essentials—soul, body, and operation—did and do exist in the Lord God, the Saviour, is universally acknowledged. That soul was from Jehovah the Father, can be denied only by anti-Christ; for in the word of both the Old and New Testaments He is called the Son of Jehovah, the Son of the Most High God, the only begotten, therefore the divine of the Father answering to the soul in man, is his first essential. That the Son who was born of the mother Mary is the body of that divine soul, in consequence of its conception; for nothing is provided in the womb of the mother except a body, conceived and derived from the soul; this, therefore, is the second essential. That operations constitute the third essential, is a consequence of their proceeding from the soul and body together, for such things as proceed are of the same essence with those who produce them" ("True Christian Religion," sec. 167). Fearing we may have misunderstood this passage, we have compared it with other parts of Swedenborg's works, and have turned to "Noble's Appeal," and we find our first impression of its meaning the correct one.

Noble says: "Now be it observed that there is this difference between the Lord Jesus Christ, while in the body of flesh on earth, and all ordinary men; that, whereas they take their soul, or spiritual part, from a human father as well as their body, or natural part, from a human mother, and thus are finite human beings as to both; Jesus Christ having no father but the Divine Father, has his soul, or internal part, from the Divine essence, and as the Divine Essence is obviously incapable of division; the Divine Essence itself, or the Father, was in fact His soul, or internal part, while His body, or external part,

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including the affections, etc., of the natural man, was all that He took from His mother" ("Appeal," p. 372).

Mr. Noble has gone beyond Swedenborg here; for Swedenborg has laid down the principle that mind, temper, disposition, affection and love are seated and generated in the soul, and derived from the father; they are not generated in the mere tabernacle or body. In fact, Swedenborg has so low an estimate of the "body" that he disbelieves in the resurrection of the actual "body" spiritualized, and he clearly, in many places, says that a "body" is incapable of mental states and sensations, otherwise than as acted upon by the soul.

The true doctrine of Swedenborg is, that the person of our Lord is a human body, animated by the Deity, in place of a human soul. Bearing in mind then that a "human body" is incapable of mental states, let us examine this theory in the light of the Sacred Word.

Mr. Noble says he is astonished that Christians as a mass have not accepted this theory; we shall now see the reason why it was impossible that the Church should ever have done so. In the first place, a mere human body, animated by Deity in place of a human soul, would not be a *man*; it would be a unique and glorious being, but not a man. If our Lord Jesus Christ were not a real *man*, the link between God and man in Christ is broken. A man consists of a human body and soul united, as Swedenborg has clearly shown elsewhere; but in Christ (we are told) we have the indivisible Divine Essence in the place of a human soul, seated in a body derived from His mother. The awful agony in the Garden of Gethsemane was a mental agony, affecting the body indeed, but certainly not generated in it.

Without quoting the many texts which prove beyond a

doubt (if the letter of Scripture is to be relied upon), that our Saviour experienced when upon earth mental states which it would be absurd to say the Deity could experience, and a mere human body is incapable of; let us examine but three passages of Holy Writ. "And when Jesus had thus said, He was troubled in spirit" (John xiii. 21). "Now is My soul troubled, and what shall I say" (John xii. 27). "When Jesus therefore saw her weeping, and the Jews also weeping which came with her, he groaned in the spirit, and was troubled." "Jesus wept" (John xi. 33-35). It is, of course, impossible to explain these passages as merely figurative, as we do those which appear according to the letter to speak the language of anthropomorphism, such as the "arm," or the "eye," or the "hand," or the "anger" of God. Here we have the body of Jesus bearing evidence to intense, real *mental* anguish, as when "He sweat as it were great drops of blood." "He weeps." These passages describe real mental conditions. The Greek of the above passages expresses more than the English. "Vehement sorrow" is generated in the soul; it was not bodily pain He experienced; indeed how He could experience the latter without a human soul is incomprehensible.

But again, the above passages do not speak of our Lord's body as experiencing this agony, but the words "spirit," (*εἶμαρ*), and "soul," (*ψυχή*), are used. "Spirit," or "soul," cannot refer to the body. Then to what do these words refer, if our Lord had no human "spirit," or "soul," but was a human body, animated by Deity? It were impious to imagine the Deity is meant; and, therefore, the Church of God has always maintained that our Lord had a human "body" and a human "soul," or "spirit," and that in this body and soul dwelt the whole Pleroma (fulness) of the Godhead, bodily. The Church's doctrine is, of course, a

"mystery," and above mere human reason; but the doctrine of Swedenborg involves either a contradiction, or the absurdity that the Deity suffered. His followers deny the latter, therefore they are involved in the former. Then the "will" is a function of the soul, and we are distinctly told our Lord consciously submits His human "will" to His Divine "will," see Luke xxii, 42). These two wills were in perfect accord, of course, in Christ; but a mere body has no power "to will."

Mr. Noble has said in the Appendix to his work: "A very common way of attempting to throw odium on the doctrines of the New Church is giving them the name of Sabellianism or some long-exploded error," and he contends that in Section VII. of his "Appeal" he has shown that he holds the Father (Deity) did *not* suffer, for the followers of Praxeas, Noctus and Sabellius were called Patripassians, because their doctrine made the Father, or Godhead, suffer.

Of course, all these men protested the same thing, viz., that they did not mean to imply by their doctrine that the Deity suffered, and so does Mr. Noble in section vii.; but neither in section vii. nor anywhere else do we find this point in the system, viz., that the person of our Lord consisted of a human body, in which dwelt the Deity in place of a human soul, reconciled with the fact that in the Gospels we are told that the "soul" of our Lord trembled with "vehement sorrow."

If we take Swedenborg's doctrine of our Lord's person, the only possible explanation of it, when placed alongside of these passages of Holy Scripture, which tell us the "spirit," or "soul," of Christ "trembled with vehement sorrow," is that that which stood in the place of a human "spirit," or "soul," in Christ, viz., Deity, suffered. This is Patripassianism. After reading Tertullian's refutation of

Praxeas, written about 254 A.D., we are firmly convinced that the doctrine he (Praxeas) propounded was identical with that of Swedenborg as regarding the Trinity. This doctrine was *then* acknowledged as something quite "new" in the Church; so the idea that the Church invented the doctrine of The Trinity about 325 A.D., at or about the time of the Council of Nice, must be a mistake; for nearly a hundred years before a great Christian writer had made an elaborate reply to the error of Swendborg on its first appearance.

Mr. Noble has clearly told us "a human body separate from the soul would be a mass of dead matter" (p. 375), and Swedenborg has told us that it was only the body of Christ which was human; but Mr. Noble, having the charge of Patripassianism before his eyes, contradicts all this on page 375; in the quotation we have made above he has added after body, "or external part, including the affections, etc., of the natural man."

We have seen that love, affection, etc., are attributes of the *soul*; therefore (and we say it with all love and reverence), this doctrine of Swedenborg is not merely above reason, and therefore a "mystery," but it is an actual contradiction, and therefore far more mysterious than the doctrine of the Church; for no logical mind could free itself from the logical conclusion of the doctrine. It must also be remembered that all the scientific leaders of to-day, outside the influence of Christianity, have followed "Mill," and say that for them the conception of a "personal God" at all is impossible. In Swedenborg's days, the word "persons" was the stumbling-block, now it is the word "person" as applied to the Deity at all. We are now told that the "personality" of God is the exploded fancy of man during his intellectual infancy. Is our next new revelation to give

us an impersonal God to satisfy the present state of progressive thought?

Origen, like Swedenborg, tells us we must ascend the Mount of Transfiguration if we would see the "Word" glorified, shining with celestial splendor, and that climbing the mountain is attaining to the spiritual sense. And this is indeed (in a sense) true; we must ascend to the true wisdom of the child-like spirit, and so believe in the doctrine of the Divine Trinity as not to believe that there are three Gods.

"And the Catholic faith is this: That we worship one God in Trinity, and Trinity in unity; neither confounding the Persons, nor dividing the 'substance,' viz., the "Deity," or "Esse" ("Creed Quicumque Vult").

