

# SPIRITUALISM: SWEDENBORG CALLED HINDERED MEDIUM

BY A SPIRITUALIST.

We have given an outline of home-centric philosophy of theomonism or higher spiritualism, and before we proceed to a review of practical spiritualism, which will be followed by a description of spirit spheres and activity of spirits, we shall note the teachings of the three principal spiritualistic philosophers of modern times, viz, Swedenborg, Davis, and Peebles. There are many others who have made a feeble attempt at giving such philosophy, but they are all either too inconsistent, atheistically materialistic or sophistically abstract to merit any special mention.

## Calls Swedenborg Theosophist.

Swedenborg has been called the founder of modern spiritualism, but we should also call him a theosophist. He is, however, best known today for what he did not intend to be, namely, the founder of a sectarian church which looks upon him as the greatest prophet after Christ. I add the observation that Swedenborg might be called a theomonist were it not for the fact that he could not get rid of the wrong idea of a hypothetical trinity, and that he never learned of the fact that souls can be released from the netherworld.

Swedenborg was born January 29, 1683, and was the son of a bishop. He was a learned naturalist and made scientific and philosophic studies. He became also a freemasonic reformer. His achievements are great, and we cannot make any mistake in honoring this truly great man.

## Greatness of Swedenborg.

Swedenborg should be called a spiritualistic theosophist. It is as a spiritualist that he specially interests us all. His spiritualistic philosophy is great because it is based on true psychic phenomena whose science was yet unformed. The greatness of Swedenborg consists in that he was enabled to get at psychic phenomena first hand. He was not only a reasoner upon facts gathered by others, but he gathered the facts himself, and in many ways was the most competent judge about the import of such facts.

When I allude to some of his teachings as being not in harmony with higher spiritualism of today, it is rather with the wish of making an excellent philosophy still more brilliant by correcting its few errors.

Swedenborg teaches that there is a natural world for the body and a spiritual world for the spirit. It would, perhaps, have been more correct if he had called all existence natural existence, for there is nothing in the universe but nature, and nature is the self expression of God as our achievement expresses us. Both matter and mind is natural, and there is nothing supernatural. Distinguishing merely between the material and the psychic we look upon the latter as the causative and the first as the effective or the formative, which, indirectly, Swedenborg also admits.

## Existence Is Continuous.

He teaches that man cannot die as to his internal, which internal, he says, is with every man. He calls this internal the spirit, and the external he calls the body. It is, however, better to clearly distinguish between the ego or soul, and the psychic and gross material or mortal bodies. Of course, he knows that spirits have bodies, but it is too theosophically expressed when he calls such psychic bodies the affections of spirits. Only expert spiritualists can clearly understand what he means by that. For the common philosopher it is more correct because less misleading to allude to this psychic body as a sublimated material form invisible only because of higher vibration than that which can be seen or felt by our blunt mortal senses.

He assumes correctly that existence is continuous and that the dead do not wait to be resurrected at the end of the world. He says that they are revived in spirit life generally on the third day after the fleshly heart has ceased to beat, and they do not at first know that they are spirits. This is often true, but many spirits revive at once when passing out, especially those who are spiritually minded and who have a knowledge of spirit life and activity.

## Claims Dead Retain Senses.

He claims that a man passing to spirit life has all senses, but he should have named these senses those of the psychic body, and I do not find that Swedenborg had a clear understanding of the fact that these very same psychic senses are in operation in mortal media, like himself.

He teaches that memory of earth conditions is carried into spirit life, but usually is quiescent, though can be called forth when, as he expresses it, "the Lord sees good." In other words, when, according to spirit law it appears as beneficial, such earth knowledge is called up in memory of spirits. I am inclined to think that there is no such law which would prevent the free recurrence of such memory; nonuse alone will extinguish it or keep it at least in abeyance. We find that spirits who freely communicate to mortals remember much of their former lives, much more often than those who are on the mortal plane of life.

He is correctly stating that the life of man after death is the life of his love and the life of his faith. It is the life of hell with those who have loved themselves and the world above all things, and the life of heaven with those who have loved God above all things and their neighbors as themselves. The latter are they who have faith, and the former those who have no faith. This is a point which modern common spiritualists would do well to understand.

## Three Hells and Three Heavens.

Swedenborg seems to know little or nothing about the gradual development of spirit spheres. He is quite orthodox in dividing everything by three, even God Himself. To Him there are three hells and three heavens, while in fact there are a bottomless pit, a world of sin, the sphere of the earthbound spirits, and 49 spheres of heaven, with many circles in each sphere, while spheres and their circles have developed one after another, in time—that is, have been built up by spirits as needed.

He is right in saying that angels are spirits of mortals, but he does not explain the fact that there are millions of solar systems with psychic entities over which Jesus the Christ is not the supreme leader. It is correct that spirits should not be called angels till they have attained intelligence and wisdom, as well as goodness in accord with divinity, to which may be added that the complete

angel consists of united soulmates in one sphere, though as ever two entities. Swedenborg knows that sex persists on spirit spheres and forever. He knows also that infants grow in spirit land and aged people gradually acquire a youthful appearance again.

## Teed a Confused Theosophist.

He is wrong in stating that spirits can enter the soul or being of a mortal, a notion formerly generally held also by other spiritualists. Instead of saying that spirits or angels can enter man's interior thought and memory, he should have said that their minds can move or less touch and direct the mortals' minds. Swedenborg's idea of obsession has led that other far more confused theosophist, Cyrus Teed, known as Koresh, to advance the idea that spirits exist only in mortals, and that a thousand spirits can dwell in one mortal. What ridiculous nonsense!

Dangerous theosophy is also contained in Swedenborg's notion that in God there are three infinite and uncreated degrees of being as there are in man three created and finite degrees. This is orthodoxy and theosophy, with a vengeance. He calls these three degrees love, wisdom, and use or end, cause, and effect, certainly a very unphilosophic mixture of qualities of the ego with the origin and purpose of its activity.

## All Things Willed by God.

There is good sense in his assertion that the final ends of all things are in the divine mind, that the causes of all things are in the spiritual world, and that their effects are in the natural world. But it would have been somewhat clearer if he had said that the germinal origin of all things is willed by God, that all things are first causative by angels on the spirit spheres, and that they work out within planes on the gross or finer material forms. Spirits themselves live within such forms and are not naked souls or abstract thought centers only.

He is also justified in saying that life flows into every soul from God and according to the character of the mortal, working a different degree of truth and goodness; but I do not think that he is justified in teaching that divine goodness and truth itself is changed by evil mortals or spirits into falsity and evil. Such rays of divine truth and goodness as are brought by missionary angels to low spirits are truly elevating to such degraded or undeveloped spirits. I am sure. God's wish is to save all souls, even from deepest hell; wherefore Swedenborg erred much when he asserted that those in hell cannot be saved, and that a bad life cannot be reformed in spirit existence (H & H 595). This orthodox dogma of eternal hell life is inspired by despairing evil spirits, a proof of the fact that Swedenborg did not always have proper guidance.

## Did Not Understand Jesus.

From the theomonistic standpoint we cannot accept Swedenborg's idea that Jehovah, i. e. one of the Elohim, namely the god of our solar system, whom he takes for Eloah, the Creator of the universe, descended to earth and incarnated as Jesus. But Swedenborg was right in rejecting the dogma of blood atonement, and this shows considerable independence of thought from orthodox Lutheranism, but he did not understand Jesus as He has revealed Himself in our days, namely, as the reincarnated, and the only reincarnated, first man on earth who lived here 200,000 years ago, and who with his female companion went his own way, misled by fallen spirits of other creations, and who came again about 2,000 years ago to redeem the race which descended from him.

Redemption was by obedience to the laws of God unto death and by true love to God and men. Theomonism is very much clearer on these theological questions. While there is none like Jesus for this earth, there are redeemers on other worlds, and some worlds do not need any redeemers.

The great judgment and founding of the New Jerusalem which Swedenborg saw was prophetic and to be understood as coming in the future. It refers to the modern spreading of spiritualism, and especially to higher spiritualism or theomonism, which is the preparation for the spiritual coming of Jesus, not as mortal again, but as the prince of heaven with innumerable of his angelic followers, to rejuvenate mankind by bringing about better economic and social conditions on the basis of a higher psychic development of the human race, a development truly Godward.

## Termed New Protestant Pope.

When I said that Swedenborg did not intend to become the founder of a sectarian church, it must not be understood that he did not think of himself as the medium for founding a new church, only he wanted it to be the new dispensation which was to embrace all mankind. In paragraph 79 of his "The True Christian Religion," he says: "Since the Lord cannot manifest himself in Person (which indeed he can to all psychically developed people), and nevertheless has foretold that He will come and found a new church which is the New Jerusalem, it follows, that He will do this by means of a man (but really by many psychics) who cannot only receive the doctrines of this church with the understanding, but can also publish them by the press."

He continues saying that "the Lord manifest Himself before me. His servant, and sent me to this office." Thus, you see, Swedenborg is the new Protestant pope, the real great and only representative of God on earth, for to him Jesus is God. He was, however, followed by another pope, namely, Cyrus Teed, called Koresh, who, citing this remark of Swedenborg, in his pamphlet, "Emanuel Swedenborg," page 31, cunningly omitted Swedenborg's reference to himself as the great representative of God, and says that he (Teed) himself is the chosen representative, by the following words:

"Koreshans believe this man to be the Cyrus (that is, Cyrus Teed) declared by the prophet Isaiah, whom they consider equally as good authority as Swedenborg." Since then, other Protestant popes have arisen; a female Pope is Mother Eddy. In the Orient, Baha-u-llah has made a big noise as being the effulgence of divine glory, and the theosophists led by Mrs. Besant have discovered now a Hindu youth whom they wish to foist upon the world as the great savior.

## Calls Ideals Childish.

Can we not see in all this a very childish and undeveloped human mind that with all its talk about spirituality and great revelations has yet little understanding about the immensity of the universe and the insignificance of the mortal on earth. I think the childish egotism is apparent in the desire to be the greatest of all. It is very dangerous to real spiritual progress to think of ourselves as great divine leaders or as God's special representatives. The more we do this the less we remain trustworthy media for real divine truth.

Concluding now, I wish to say that with all his little faults, Emanuel Swedenborg was a philosopher who did more for the world than dozens of other philosophers taken together. Instead of his theosophic interpretations it would, perhaps, have been better if he had confined himself a little more to scientifically investigating the phenomena of mediumship, as it might have saved many later untutored media from falling into all sorts of wrong teachings.

## Swedenborg a True Medium.

Swedenborg was a true medium and he was on the right track of getting higher revelations, but he was all too eager to interpret them by orthodox earthly teachings, which hindered him to get a clearer understanding about the higher truths of the existence of God, gods, and angels.

I bow to the memory of this truly great man, knowing that no human reformer has ever been perfect and never will be, for we see as yet only dimly into the spirit realms.

May all Swedenborgians, and their number is large, follow this great man and become true religious media! H. P. H.