

**EMANUEL
SWEDENBORG:
A BIOGRAPHY**

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Emanuel Swedenborg: A Biography by James John Garth Wilkinson

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JAMES JOHN GARTH WILKINSON

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BY

JAMES JOHN GARTH WILKINSON.

"What is this
'Gainst which I strive to shield the sight in vain,"
Cried I, "and which toward us moving seems?"
"Marvel not if the family of heaven,"
He answered, "yet with dazzling radiance dim
Thy sense. It is a messenger who comes,
Inviting man's ascent. Such sights are long,
Not grievous, shall impart to thee delight,
As thy perception is by nature wrought
Up to their pitch."

Cory's Dante.

BOSTON:
OTIS CLAPP, 23 SCHOOL STREET.

1849.

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TO
Dr. P. E. SVEDBOM,
FELLOW OF THE UNIVERSITY OF UPSAL,
LIBRARIAN TO THE ROYAL ACADEMY OF SCIENCES OF SWEDEN,
AND HEAD MASTER OF THE NEW SCHOOL IN STOCKHOLM,
THIS WORK IS DEDICATED,
AS A SLIGHT BUT SINCERE TOKEN OF FRIENDSHIP, GRATITUDE AND ESTEEM.
BY
THE AUTHOR.

PREFACE.

I ~~HERE~~ present to English readers a first attempt towards a connected Biography of Swedenborg, fully sensible of my own deficiencies for such an undertaking. But my studies have seemed to require it of me at a period when the exchange of thought and learning is freer than heretofore, and when each man's wares are expected in the market. My first end will be satisfied if it renders an author, hitherto unknown from his great peculiarity, and difficult of access from his bulk, an object of some knowledge to the literary and intelligent classes.

In fulfilling my design I have endeavored to keep always in view, that I am writing a life and not pleading a cause. Still I have written the life affirmatively, because I could not help it. The method has its advantages; for as our Carlyle says, "sympathy is the first essential towards insight." Nothing however will better please me, than a fair biography by another, from an opposite point of view.

For whatever I have said, I alone am responsible.

No body of persons is chargeable with my sentiments in the work. While writing it, I have had no audience before me but the public.

I have every where made use of the most authentic documents and sources.

The reader who desires a further elucidation of Swedenborg's philosophy, necessarily brief in a popular life, will find more on the subject in the Introduction to my translation of the *Animal Kingdom*, and in my Introductory Remarks to Mr. Clissold's version of the *Economy*: I would also refer him to Mr. Strutt's translation of Swedenborg's *Chemical Specimens*, and to Mr. Clissold's, of the *Principia*, and to my *Popular Sketch of Swedenborg's Philosophical Works*.

I have omitted no tolerably authenticated singularities of the subject of this Memoir. Such things are odd in the life of particular persons, because we do not understand the life. They either enlarge our apprehension, or measure our dullness. I have said the worst of Swedenborg that I honestly can: it will be a good voice that says the lawful best. I have not attempted it.

Hampstead, Oct. 5, 1849.

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LIFE OF SWEDENBORG.

PART I.

THERE is, in the present day, a constantly increasing enquiry among intelligent persons, respecting the life and labors of Swedenborg, whose name begins to be whispered, with more or less respect, and with undefined feelings, throughout Christendom; and it is the intention of the following pages to give a short account of that author's career, to serve as a guide to those readers who are interested in the subject, and to facilitate them in pursuing it for themselves. We shall dogmatize but little in the narrative, but chiefly state facts, and accompany them with a few comments. We are no followers of Swedenborg, although we accept his views of Christianity, but not because *he* discovered them, but because they were there to be discovered, and are true. The truth, we believe, is not arrested or contained by any man, but as soon as found, the mind may pass from that level, and rise from it as a vantage ground to new truths. It is, therefore, in the service of the public, and not of Swedenborg, that we write these pages; for the time has come when every enlightened man and woman ought, for their own sakes, to know of Swedenborg and his pretensions.

For consider the case. Here was an author, flourishing in the last century, whose principal works were writ-