

**ADDRESS TO THE CLERGY,
AND SKEPTICISM AND
DIVINE REVELATION**

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Address to the Clergy, and Skepticism and Divine Revelation by John Ellis

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DIVINE REVELATION.

BY

JOHN ELLIS, M. D.,

Author of the "Avoidable Causes of Disease," "Marriage and its Violations," "The Wine Question in the Light of the New Dispensation," "A Reply to the Academy's Review," and "Deterioration of the Puritan Stock."

THE TRUE HOPE OF MANKIND AT THIS DAY IS NOT IN LOOKING BACK—
TO JUDAISM, ROMAN CATHOLICISM, PROTESTANTISM, OR ANY OF
THE FORMS OF THE PAST—BUT FORWARD AND UPWARD TO THE
NEW JERUSALEM, WHICH IS NOW, IN THIS NEW AGE, DESCENDING
FROM GOD OUT OF HEAVEN.

NEW YORK:
PUBLISHED BY THE AUTHOR
1886.

AN ADDRESS TO THE CLERGY.

A FEW EARNEST WORDS TO CLERGYMEN AND THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH CONCERNING THE SECOND COMING OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST AND THE WRITINGS OF EMANUEL SWEDENBORG IN CONNECTION THEREWITH.

DEAR BRETHREN :

That great and significant changes in the relation of men to the Church have taken place within the past century, is apparent to all. That some of these changes are for good none can doubt. That some of them portend other and more marked changes is equally evident. Earnest men in all branches of the Universal Church feel that a crisis is impending which can scarcely result in the restoration of things as they have been. The attitude of men to the Word of God, the disregard of theology, and the proud independence of individual inquiry, as well as the more or less active antagonism of the scientific spirit of our time, are sufficient causes of anxiety. There never was greater need of clear-eyed watchmen in Israel than there is now ; and we would commend to the clergy of all denominations the subject matter of this earnest address.

Nineteen hundred years ago the Jewish Church and Priesthood were looking for the Messiah to establish a literal kingdom on earth, according to their understanding of the Sacred Prophecies, but the Lord in His wisdom did not come in the manner the learned Rabbis expected ; and when He came to the Church on earth—to His own—His own recognized Him not ; for His kingdom was not of this world, and it did not accord with the wisdom and preconceived ideas of the Jews. Consequently, instead of receiving Him joyfully they reviled, persecuted and crucified Him.

In the Gospels and the Book of Revelation, as you are aware, our blessed Lord predicts a Second Coming, and in language somewhat similar to that used in the Old Testament in regard to His first coming; and the Inquiry which He addressed to His Disciples and Church: "When the Son of man cometh shall He find faith on the earth?" may, at least, allow a doubt as to the reception which He expected the Christian Church would extend to Him at His second coming. Is it not true that in a like manner as the Jews were looking for a literal coming, so too many professed Christians are to-day looking for His literal coming in natural clouds of earth, instead of a spiritual coming in the clouds of heaven?

As we look around us at the wonderful changes which are taking place in every department of human knowledge, and in the views and feelings of men, do we behold no signs that we are living in a transitional age—no intimations that old things are passing away and all things are being made new—no indications that we are living in the dawning light of a new dispensation from God to man? Ye watchmen who stand upon the walls of Zion, what of the hour? What are the signs of the times? Are all the improvements and changes which are taking place the result of human wisdom and progress, or are they indications or manifestations of a new dispensation of divine truth—perchance of the coming of the Son of Man in the clouds of heaven? What say ye? Is there no new light gently breaking in upon the minds of men, and with the most astonishing rapidity, "as the lightning cometh out of the east and shineth even unto the west;" and if there is, from whence does it come?—from the Lord, or from men, or spirits, as some suppose? Let us remember that the Lord's coming was to be like a thief in the night, at an unexpected hour.

Is it not true that prophecies are not generally fully understood until they are fulfilled, and even then only by the "wise men from the east," or the willing and obedient who love the *Lord and their neighbor*?

Is it not possible that Christian teachers may be looking

miss for the coming of our Lord ; or, practically heedless of His promise, resting thoughtlessly in traditional interpretations, and thus blind to the actual revelation in power and glory of Him whose "name" is the "Word of God"? The Church misinterpreted the prophecies of His first advent, and may not the Church of our day be deceived with an equally false traditional interpretation of the prophecy of His second advent? May we not well meditate on that Scripture: "The letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life"?

In the revelations made, as we most sincerely believe, by the Lord through Emanuel Swedenborg, more than a century ago, it is clearly shown that the spiritual world is the world of causes, and the material world the world of effects; and that all effects, in the very nature of things, must correspond with their causes. As Paul most beautifully tells us: "The invisible things of Him, from the creation of the world, are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made." The Word of the Lord, being necessarily in harmony with His works, was written in accordance with this correspondence between spiritual and natural things. All of the Lord's works, as manifested in the animal and vegetable kingdoms, are infilled with life, and are living. Man may form the image of an animal or tree, but he cannot give to that image life. The same is true of the Lord's Words, or the Sacred Scriptures, as of His works; they are living, as He so plainly tells us. "It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing; the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life."

It will be seen, then, that the Word of the Lord differs as much from the writings of men as do His works from the works of men. Swedenborg assures us that this is true; that the Word of God is plenarily divine, and that it contains throughout divine and spiritual senses in correspondence with its literal sense. He claims that he was prepared and enlightened to make known the science of this correspondence, and to open for the Church the spiritual sense of the Word wherein divine truth is in its power and glory; and that this revelation of the Lord is His

second coming. It may be granted that our first impulse is to associate this claim with the human instrument, and repudiate it. But he most solemnly assures us that he neither invented nor received anything of either the doctrines of the New Jerusalem, or of the internal sense of the Sacred Scriptures, from any spirit or angel, but from the Lord alone, while he read the Word. Again, in the "True Christian Religion," we read as follows : "Since the Lord cannot manifest Himself in person, as has been shown just above, and yet He has foretold that He would come and establish a New Church, which is the New Jerusalem, it follows that He is to do it by means of a man who is able not only to receive the doctrines of this Church with his understanding, but also to publish them by the press. That the Lord has manifested Himself before me, His servant, and sent me on this office, and that after this He opened the sight of my spirit, and thus let me into the spiritual world, and gave me to see the heavens and the hells, and also to speak with angels and spirits, and this now continually for many years, I testify in truth ; and also that, from the first day of that call, I have not received anything which pertains to the doctrines of that Church from any angel but from the Lord alone, while I read the Word."

The reader of his writings needs not angelic wisdom to perceive that the grand system of spiritual truths therein contained, and a knowledge of the correspondences by which the Holy Scriptures are rationally interpreted, are neither the invention of man nor derived from man, but are from the Lord alone, to whom belongs the honor and glory. The Seer of the new age claimed simply to be a "servant of the Lord Jesus Christ," and that his fellowmen should receive the truths contained in his writings because they perceive them to be true, and not on his authority; for the revelations are adapted to man's intellectual perceptions and are to be received rationally. Yet no prophet, disciple or revelator has ever made a more distinct claim as to his mission. Speaking of the Book of Revelation he says :

"Any person may see that the Apocalypse could not be explained by any one but the Lord alone, as every word of it con-

tains arcana which never could be known without some special illumination and consequent revelation. Therefore it has pleased the Lord to open the sight of my spirit and to teach me. It must not, therefore, be supposed that I have given any interpretation of my own, or even that of any angel, but simply what has been communicated to me from the Lord alone." Again he says: "The Apocalypse, like the rest of the Word, treats, in its spiritual sense, not of earthly but of heavenly things; that is, not of empires and kingdoms, but of heaven and the Church."

According to the science of correspondences, the material sun corresponds to the spiritual sun, or the Lord; the light from the sun corresponds to the divine truth, for truth is spiritual light; the heat of the sun corresponds to the divine love, for love is spiritual heat. The light and heat of the material sun illuminate and warm the body and material earth, as truth and love from the Lord do the spirit of man and the mental earth. The eyes correspond to the understanding, for they receive natural light as the latter does spiritual light, or truth. The heart corresponds to the will, or affections; for it is easy to perceive that it serves the same purpose in the material body that the will does in the spiritual body. Paul assures us that "there is a spiritual body, and there is a natural body." The material, being but the clothing of the spiritual, must correspond to the latter in every particular; for the material has been fashioned and molded into form by the spiritual.

The natural clouds and atmosphere modify and adapt the light and heat of the natural sun to man's natural eyes; they therefore correspond to the clouds of heaven, or the literal sense of the sacred Scriptures, which modifies and adapts the divine truth and love, or spiritual light and heat, to man's spiritual vision. The clouds in which the Lord was to come, then, were the clouds of the letter of His Holy Word. The sun which was to be darkened at His coming was not the material sun, but the heavenly sun, or the Lord. When darkness prevails in the world, it is not because the sun does not shine, but because either the earth turns from the sun, or some opaque object intervenes between the sun

and the earth. It is precisely so in regard to the spiritual sun; for the Lord's truth and love, or spiritual light and heat, ever flow down through the Holy Scriptures to man; but spiritual darkness is caused by man's turning from the Lord and His Word to the traditions of men, and his own self-derived intelligence, and coming to love himself, power, money and sensual gratifications more than he loves the Lord and his neighbor.

The moon, giving but a reflected light with comparatively little heat, corresponds to faith; and its becoming as blood, denotes that true faith in the Lord would be destroyed. The stars of heaven, which were to fall to the earth, were not the material stars, but the knowledges of goodness and truth, or spiritual stars, seen and revealed in the Sacred Scriptures to guide our footsteps in states of mental darkness and doubt, and to which our Savior appealed in hours of temptation. These glorious truths, or stars, do indeed fall to the earth when man drags them down to the justification of a perverted, sensual, earthly and evil life, expecting to escape the legitimate consequences of his acts, and to reach heaven in the end by an easier way than by striving daily and earnestly to live a life according to the commandments and the Lord's sayings.

It will be seen, as has already been intimated, that the coming of the Son of Man in the clouds of heaven was not to be in the material clouds of earth, but in the Word in its literal sense—which constitutes the clouds of heaven—revealing its spirit and life; for it is through the letter of the Word that man receives spiritual light and heat, or truth and love, as he receives natural light and heat through the natural clouds and atmosphere.

The Holy City, New Jerusalem, which was to descend from the Lord out of heaven, at the time of His second coming, was not to be a literal city of twelve thousand furlongs, of equal length, breadth and height, but a New Church or dispensation to be established by the Lord at the end of the first Christian Church or dispensation. A city corresponds to a Church as to *doctrine, for men dwell in a city naturally as they do in a Church spiritually. The gates of a city correspond to the introductory*