

SWEDENBORG'S CONTEMPORARY INSANITY ACCUSERS: ALSO REFLECTIONS ON THE UNDERLYING CAUSE OF INSANITY CHARGES

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The authorship of Emanuel Swedenborg (1688–1772) falls into two distinct periods of his life: The first devoted to science and philosophy (about 1710–1745), and the second to theology (about 1745 to his death in 1772). The New Jerusalem Church (The New Church, for short) would call the latter period one of revelation, namely, the revelation of the Doctrines for the New Church.

I here note that those who would prove some form of mental derangement on the part of Swedenborg face some dilemmas. First, no diagnosis is based on any observed behavior of Swedenborg's, but only on his own notations concerning his spiritual experiences (I shall later report on a *rumored* behavior); second, he carried on in a highly respected manner his duties as a member of the House of Nobles in the Swedish Diet, and this throughout the years of the theological period; third, he enjoyed a normal social life—i.e. normal in every way, except for the fact that conversations at table tended to turn to his experiences in the spiritual world.

Indeed, his social life could deserve a chapter of its own, for it included people of all walks of life, from the King and Queen, other royals, men of learning, and members of the government and the clergy, down to commoners who sought his company because of his writings and his character—in fact, his social sphere appears to have widened after it became known that he had open communication with the spiritual world. And men like Carl Robsahm, a banker of Stockholm, Sweden, and the prosperous merchant Johan Christian Cuno of Amsterdam, Holland, testify to his relaxed and also elegant behavior in formal company. The testimony concerning a learned but modest gentleman with becoming manners is well-nigh unanimous.

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Says Robsahm: "He was cheerful and pleasant in company and, as a recreation from his severe labors, he enjoyed conversation with intelligent persons by whom he was always well received and much respected."¹ And Cuno adds to the social portrait: "It soon became known in town that I cultivated the society of this remarkable man and everyone tormented me to give them an opportunity of making his acquaintance." Yet Cuno, knowing for one thing that his honored friend "never stays up longer than seven o'clock," wanted to protect him from people driven by curiosity. Still, he adds,

Once at the urgent request of the wife of my friend Herr (K), I agreed to bring him to dinner. The old gentleman was at once willing and ready...Herr Swedenborg's deportment was uncommonly polite and gallant. As we were called to the table I offered Madame (K) my hand to lead her to the dining room. Instantly my young man of eighty-one years had his new gloves on and presented his hand to Mlle. (H), which became him very well.²

These tidbits from Swedenborg's social life will indicate that he was met with respect and that there was no appearance of a deranged mind. Apparently, however, there were indications of admiration turning into veneration, so that Swedenborg felt constrained to guard against such. In his *Journal of Dreams* he makes the following entry:

While the thought occurred to me, as it often does, if it should happen that anyone took me for a holy man, and therefore made much of me; nay, as is done by some simpleminded folks, if they were not only to venerate me but even adore me as a supposed saint; I then perceived that in the zeal in which I then was, I would be willing to inflict upon him every evil, even unto the extreme, rather than [to permit] anything of such a sin to cleave to him. And [I recognized] that I must entreat our Lord with

¹ C. O. Sigstedt, *The Swedenborg Epic: the Life and Works of Emanuel Swedenborg* (New York: Bookman Associates, 1952), 350.

² Sigstedt, 364.

earnest prayers, that I may not have any share in so damnable a sin, or that it should cleave to me.³

Indeed, it is only to be expected that conversations at table should turn to Swedenborg's experiences in the other world, for it appears that even people who deny the existence of a real and populated spirit-world are strangely eager for any peep into it that opportunity might offer. So Swedenborg told high and low about that world and, when asked, about people he had talked with there. But numerous contemporary testimonies—and R.L. Tafel collected about twenty extensive such from Sweden, Holland, and England⁴ (see *Documents* II, 395–571)—show that there was nothing fanatical, pretentious, or grandiose about Swedenborg's deportment; he would speak of his conversations with named deceased persons in the way others might talk about their acquaintances in their home town. To him life in the other world was everyday life. He was there just as he was here. And Cuno mentions his innocent and smiling blue eyes.

Swedenborg's spiritual experiences were in fact not important to him per se. They were simply part of his mission; and the *mission* was important. In a letter to the King, May 10, 1770, referring to his dining at the royal table, and how he had then spoken openly about his mission, he writes:

That our Saviour visibly revealed Himself before me, and commanded me to do what I have done, and what I have still to do; and that thereupon He permitted me to have communication with angels and spirits, I have declared before the whole of Christendom, as well in England, Holland, Germany, and Denmark, as in France and Spain, and also on various occasions in this country before their Royal Majesties, and especially when I enjoyed the grace to eat at their table, in the presence of the whole royal family, and also of five senators and others; at which time my mission constituted the sole topic of conversation...That our Saviour

³ Emanuel Swedenborg, *Journal of Dreams* (Bryn Athyn, PA: Academy Book Room, 1918), n. 72.

⁴ Rudolph L. Tafel (compiler, translator, annotator), *Documents concerning the Life and Character of Emanuel Swedenborg* 3 vols. 2000 pp. (London: Swedenborg Society, 1875).

permits me to experience this, is not on my own account, but for the sake of a sublime interest which concerns the eternal welfare of all Christians.⁵

Not important *per se* —yet an integral part of the mission itself, which “concerned the eternal welfare of all Christians.” In the first published work of his period of theology (in the year 1749), in the early pages, Swedenborg is more explicit:

As of the Lord’s Divine mercy it has been given me to know the internal meaning of the Word, in which are contained deepest arcana that have not before come to any one’s knowledge, nor can come unless the nature of the other life is known (for very many things of the Word’s internal sense have regard to, describe, and involve those of that life), I am permitted to disclose what I have heard and seen during some years in which it has been granted me to be in the company of spirits and angels.⁶

We note here, “*nor can come unless...*” The essential mission was the opening of the internal sense of the Word—“the coming of the Son of man in the clouds of the heavens with power and great glory.”⁷ But the opening of that sense presupposed the opening of the spiritual world, for “things of the Word’s internal sense have regard to...those of [the other] life.” The internal, or spiritual, sense of the Word is the sense by which angels live. It is their lawbook. It is also the sense/lawbook for the spirit of man, which is his mind. Hence: spiritual world/spiritual Word—that is the connection.

Finally, one observation before I tell of Swedenborg’s accusers. It is striking that all the charges relating to Swedenborg’s mental state are based on the narratives from the other world. The voluminous exposition of the spiritual sense of Scripture—twelve volumes of the *Arcana Coelestia*, two volumes of the *Apocalypse Revealed*, and another six volumes of the *Apocalypse Explained* —plus the closely argued doctrinal works like *Angelic Wisdom Concerning the Divine Love and Wisdom*, *Angelic Wisdom Concerning*

⁵ Tafel, *Documents* II: 375, 376.

⁶ *Arcana Coelestia* (hereinafter AC), n. 67.

⁷ Matt. 24: 30; AC 4060: 7.

the Divine Providence, and *The True Christian Religion*, not to mention several others, are virtually ignored. It is hard to hold back the thought that this ignoring is consciously, or more likely subconsciously, deliberate. For all those ignored works are eminently rational in approach, and all are addressed to the thoughtful human understanding: they all follow the maxim, that "now it is lawful to enter intellectually into the arcana of faith."⁸ I am not saying that the spiritual narratives bypass the understanding, only that the narratives are not argued; they are just set forth.

CONTEMPORARY ACCUSERS

Most of the more fierce attacks on Swedenborg in his own time came from fellow Swedes. There was even an attempt to have him confined in an insane asylum. One Swedish accuser lived in London, where he was the pastor of the Swedish church. John Wesley picked up the rumor spread by this pastor, obviously believed it, and actively promulgated it, but had no part in instigating it. One famous critic who was a non-Swede was, of course, Immanuel Kant. His book, *Träume eines Geistersehers* (Dreams of a Spirit-Seer) was called to Swedenborg's attention, and Swedenborg said he would reply to it (see comments below). But now let us take note of some of the charges that came to public view.

1. Conspiracy by members of the House of the Clergy.

The following is quoted from notes by Carl Robsahm, as translated by Tafel in his *Documents Concerning Swedenborg*. The incident in question occurred in the year 1769. We bear in mind that Lutheranism was the established State Religion of the country, and that faith in a tripersonal God and faith in the atonement of the Son as the sure means of salvation were commonly preached in all churches.

Swedenborg had ordered from England for the Diet in Norrköping (1769) a small box of his works, which in accordance with the regulations

⁸ Emanuel Swedenborg, *True Christian Religion*, n. 508.

of customs was detained in the customhouse, on account of their containing foreign or heterodox thoughts on religion. Swedenborg, therefore, asked a clergyman [Bishop Filenius], one of his influential relatives, to get this box released for him, because he desired to distribute the books among the members of the various Houses of the Diet. This man assured Swedenborg he would, and embraced and kissed him; but when he went up to the House, it was he who insisted most strongly that the books should not be released. For this man Swedenborg entertained afterwards great contempt, and always called him Judas Iscariot, who betrayed his friend with a kiss. Swedenborg said that he would have been much better pleased with a downright refusal, than with a false promise inspiring confidence...

During the Diet of 1769 a cunning stratagem was planned by some members of the House of the Clergy, by which Swedenborg was to be summoned before a court of justice, and after the first examination to be declared a man who had lost his senses by his speculations in religion, whom it was most dangerous to leave in freedom, and who therefore ought to be confined in a lunatic asylum. As soon as a certain senator, a friend of Swedenborg's, heard about this, he wrote him a letter, in which he disclosed the scheme, and advised him to leave the country.

Swedenborg upon this became very sorrowful, and going straightway into his garden, fell upon his knees, and in tears prayed to the Lord, and asked Him what he should do; when he received the comforting assurance, that nothing evil should befall him—as was the case; for his enemies did not dare to carry out their persecution, when they considered that he was the head of a family, and related to other influential families, both in the House of Nobles and in the House of the Clergy.⁹

Swedenborg did in fact leave the country, though not for good, because he had business in Amsterdam, Holland. On account of ordinances relating to the State Church, Swedenborg was unable to have his theological works printed in Sweden; so he had them done in Amsterdam or London.

⁹ Tafel, *Documents* I: 46, 49.

Before he left, however, he sent a memorial protest to the House of Clergy, addressing, not the above scheme, but the non-release of his books from the customhouse. This document reads:

Respectful Memorial:

On my return home to Stockholm, I was informed that the book given out by me in Holland, called *Delitiae Sapientiae de Amore Conjugiali et Voluptates Insaniae de Amore Scortatorio* [the work *Conjugal Love*] was confiscated in Norrköping by the venerable House of the Clergy. Now, as I intended to present copies thereof to the libraries and also to the Bishops and to some other persons who have mature understanding, and to send the rest to Petersburg, Danzig, Königsburg, Lübeck, and the carrying out of this intention is now denied me, therefore it is my respectful request that the copies confiscated in Norrköping be released to me. I will mention here, that the above-mentioned book has been permitted entrance into Holland, England, Germany, Denmark, and also into France and Spain, and has been well received.

Stockholm, October 6, 1769Em. Swedenborg¹⁰

Acton comments editorially that the Memorial was never presented to the House of the Clergy, and that Bishop Filenius was the presiding officer. It was, however, read to the Ecclesiastical Committee on December 3.

2. Rumor spread by Rev. Aaron Mathesius

Mathesius was the pastor of the Swedish Church in London. Swedenborg while residing in that city presented him with a copy of *Arcana Coelestia*, but it is said that Mr. Mathesius never read it. Knowing his hostility towards his writings, Swedenborg declined when in bed

¹⁰ Alfred Action (translator, editor), *Letters and Memorials of Emanuel Swedenborg* (Bryn Athyn, PA: Swedenborg Scientific Association, 1955), II: 689.

shortly before his death to receive the sacrament of the Eucharist from the hands of this pastor but did receive it from another Swedish clergyman. The rumor we are now concerned with was disseminated some years after Swedenborg's death, and it was done through John Wesley who named Mathesius as his authority. We quote from the *Arminian Magazine* for 1783 (Vol. VI, 437 ff), in which John Wesley has a lengthy article entitled, "Thoughts on the Writings of Baron Swedenborg."¹¹ Wesley writing:

Many years ago the Baron came over to England, and lodged at one Mr. Brockmer's: who informed me (and the same information was given me by Mr. Mathesius, a very serious Swedish clergyman, both of whom were alive when I left London, and, I suppose, are so still), that while he was in his house he had a violent fever; in the height of which, being totally delirious, he broke from Mr. Brockmer, ran into the street stark naked, proclaimed himself the Messiah, and rolled himself in the mire. I suppose he dates from this time his admission into the Society of Angels. From this time we are undoubtedly to date that peculiar species of insanity which attended him, with scarce any intermission, to the day of his death.

In an earlier edition of his *Arminian Magazine* (January, 1781) Mr. Wesley had published a considerably longer account, relating to Swedenborg, which he said "was given [him] by one of [Swedenborg's] own countrymen." This countryman, Mathesius, in turn attributes all particulars of his account to Mr. Brockmer, whom he names again and again throughout his account, as though quoting him by heart and thus giving the appearance of authenticity to every detail. Prominent is the point that Swedenborg claimed to be the Messiah—as e.g. per paragraph 9: "...Mr. Brockmer continued to visit him: he [Swedenborg] had often expressed his thanks to him for his great care, but would never give up the point that he was the Messiah; on which Mr. Brockmer always declined to dispute." (This 1781 account follows immediately after the above 1783 piece by Wesley in Tafel's *Documents*.)

¹¹ Tafel, *Documents* II: 584ff.

People are fond of sensational rumors, and such tend to be perpetuated. It is therefore important that steps were immediately taken to examine and refute the above. Before reporting on these, however, I would remind the reader of Swedenborg's comments in his *Journal of Dreams* quoted above (see pp. 120–121), to the effect that he would do anything to suppress or nullify any attempt to make him “a holy man.”

The examination and consequent refutation took the form of an interview with Mr. Brockmer. Four gentlemen figure in this interview, two of them named: Mr. Robert Beatson and Mr. Robert Hindmarsh. The latter of these two has a special place in the history of the New Church. A book publisher and printer by profession, he promoted the translation and printing of Swedenborg's theological works into English; led a group to the formation of the first public organization of the New Church in the world; was the first person to receive baptism into the faith of the New Church; took steps to institute a New Church Priesthood, and was some years later recognized by the church in England as the first ordaining minister of the New Church. For some years in the 1800s he served as President of the General Conference of the New Church (first organized in 1789). Mr. Robert Beatson, an early receiver of the teachings of the New Church, was elected Secretary of the first General Conference, and in 1791 he presented “a thorough refutation of John Wesley's calumnies against Swedenborg” in *The Magazine of Knowledge*, London.

We quote from Tafel's *Documents*:

Soon after the publication of John Wesley's attack on Swedenborg in the 'Arminian Magazine' for 1783, Mr. Robert Beatson of Rotherham in Yorkshire, undertook a vindication of Swedenborg's writings which had been 'so grossly misrepresented, misquoted, and falsified by Mr. Wesley.' After finishing his vindication...he came to London, and in company with Mr. Robert Hindmarsh and two other friends called on Mr. Brockmer in order to interrogate him with respect to the truth of the statement which Mr. Wesley attributed to him. The result of their interview with Mr. Brockmer was published in the 'Magazine of Knowledge' for 1791 (Vol. II, pp. 92–96), and is as follows:

1. After communicating to Mr. Brockmer the purport of their visit, Mr. Beatson and his friends requested to know whether he had ever given any account of Baron Swedenborg to Mr. Wesley; for that he (Mr. Wesley) had publicly asserted this in his 'Arminian Magazine.' Mr. Brockmer immediately denied the fact, positively declaring 'that he had never opened his mouth on the subject to Mr. Wesley;' and seemed much displeased that Mr. Wesley should have taken the liberty to make use of his name in public print, without his knowledge or consent.

2. The following paragraph was then read to Mr. Brockmer, from the 'Arminian Magazine' for August, 1783...¹²

As soon as the above paragraph was read, Mr. Brockmer said, 'That it was entirely false; that he never gave any information of the kind to Mr. Wesley, but supposed that some other person might have made such a report to Mr. Wesley, who he said was very credulous, and easy to be imposed upon by idle tale, from whatever quarter it came.' Mr. Brockmer further added, 'That Baron Swedenborg was never afflicted with any illness, much less with a violent fever, while at his house; nor did he ever break from him in a delirious state, and run into the street stark naked, and there proclaimed himself the Messiah.' Mr. Brockmer acknowledged, 'that he had *heard a report*, that Baron Swedenborg had rolled himself in the mire; but he could not be certain of the fact, because he did not see it himself, *but was only told so...*

4. ...Mr. Brockmer, therefore, denied the truth of the following points which had been raised against Swedenborg by J. Wesley or Mathesius:

1. That he ever gave information respecting Swedenborg to Mr. Wesley.
2. That Swedenborg ever was afflicted with a fever at his house.
3. That he ever broke from him in a delirious state, and ran into the street, proclaiming himself the Messiah.
4. That Swedenborg ever looked frightful and wild.

¹² See above p. 126.

5. That he ever foamed at his mouth.
6. He acknowledged, that *he had heard a report*, that Baron Swedenborg had rolled himself in the mire; but he did not see it himself, and was only told so.¹³

Now as the above points to fabrication on the part of Mr. Mathesius, it would seem in order to draw up some perspective on Mr. Mathesius' actions. We have already seen his disdain for the book Swedenborg gave him. But his own society offers more of an insight into his person. In the *Anteckningar rörande Svenska Kyrkan i London* (Records of the Swedish Church in London), p. 82, there is the following entry:

On April 29, 1777, the Swedish congregation sent a letter to His Royal Majesty, containing the following nine points of accusation against their pastor, Mathesius: Arbitrary administration of the money belonging to the church; personal attacks from the pulpit; keeping the minutes of the congregation in a slovenly manner; refusing the members of the congregation access to the church books; holding church meetings without calling them in a legal way; signing the minutes of the proceedings with the names of members without their knowledge; going to the country without leave of absence; causing dissension in the congregation by exciting the lower classes against the higher, and persuading them that they possess rights which do not belong to them; and, finally, purchasing a parsonage in an unlawful way.¹⁴

Mathesius was ordered to defend himself; was in the meantime suspended from his functions; did produce a long reply; helped to procure the adoption of a constitution of the church which he had previously opposed; and was on March 21, 1779, reinstated in his office.¹⁵

¹³ Tafel, *Documents* II: 600–603.

¹⁴ Tafel, *Documents* I: 702.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

We learn further from the same Records of the Swedish Church in London, p. 89, that

in the summer of 1783 Pastor Mathesius was overtaken by a severe illness, whereby he was disabled from continuing his office. In the quarterly meeting which was held on August 18 of the same year it was announced that Ambassador Baron von Nolcken had made arrangements with the Danish minister to hold services in the Swedish Church every alternate Sunday...[By May, 1784] Mathesius had been so far restored that, after being relieved from his pastoral office, he was able to return to his native country, where he remained until his death.¹⁶

The above are the chief contemporary accusers. But we will also briefly review the query of the philosopher Kant and the worries of the merchant Cuno.

3. Immanuel Kant's *Dreams of a Spirit-Seer*

This book is a well known attack on Swedenborg's sanity. Yet while satirizing Swedenborg—in this vein renaming him Schwedenberg—Kant apparently was quite fascinated by him and appeared torn between admiration and doubt. "Madness and Intelligence have not clearly defined bounds," he wrote. He had known of Swedenborg through the *Acta Eruditorum*, published at Leipzig, where from time to time Swedenborg's scientific-philosophical works had been noticed. And now Kant also heard stories from Stockholm—stories known as "the Queen's secret," "the lost receipt," and others—that seemed to give credence to Swedenborg's claim of open communication with the spiritual world.

Prompted by Charlotte von Knobloch, "a lady full of an enthusiastic love for knowledge, who was highly esteemed by Kant," the latter therefore decided to make special inquiries. He wrote to Miss von Knobloch: "I commissioned [an English gentleman who spent the last summer at this place], as he was going to Stockholm, to make particular inquiries respect-

¹⁶ Ibid.

ing the miraculous gift which M. de Swedenborg is said to possess." Kant later added that Swedenborg had told this Englishman that "he would proceed to London in the month of May, this year, where he would publish a book in which an answer to his letter in every point might be met with."¹⁷

It is not certain which book Swedenborg had in mind, but it is likely that it was *Intercourse Between the Soul and the Body*, published at London in 1769. This book deals with the question of physical influx, spiritual influx, or preestablished harmony (as represented by the philosophers Aristotle, Descartes, and Leibnitz respectively). It contains the statement, "There are two worlds, the spiritual world where spirits and angels are, and the natural world where men are" (*ibid.*, n. 3). But perhaps the following is a more direct answer:

I was once asked how from a philosopher I became a theologian; and I answered, In the same manner that fishermen were made disciples and apostles by the Lord; and that I also from early youth had been a spiritual fisherman. On hearing this the inquirer asked, What is a spiritual fisherman? I replied that a fisherman in the spiritual sense of the Word signifies a man who investigates and teaches natural truths, and afterwards spiritual truths rationally. (*Ibid.*, n. 20)

4. Cuno's worries

Johan Christian Cuno is one of Swedenborg's contemporaries who has given us the extensive testimonies to which I earlier referred. He was a man alert in matters of both philosophy and religion and apparently able to read books in the Latin language. He sought out Swedenborg's company when the latter stayed in Amsterdam. While a friend and admirer, he was not a follower; and he had doubts because Swedenborg denied the resurrection of the body and a last judgment in this world, and because he could not in other matters reconcile Swedenborg's teachings with what he read in the Word of God. But on many occasions he says that he defended Swedenborg, and in the matter of sanity or insanity he tended to give

¹⁷ Tafel, *Documents* II: 620–622.

Swedenborg the benefit of the doubt. Cuno also took note of the remarkable circumstance that although the writings of Swedenborg challenged orthodoxy and his books had been long before the public, they remained “without a single theologian taking any notice of them.”

The following brief extracts will give us the flavor both of his general feeling towards his old honored friend and his judgment with regard to the insanity question.

A. 1. I must remain faithful to the promise made last year, and begin by giving an account of the most singular saint who has ever lived, Mr. Emanuel Swedenborg. As nothing concerns me more in this world than the worship of God, and as I found interspersed in the last work of that man such strange and singular things, I was naturally impelled by an irresistible curiosity to make the acquaintance of the author. On reading the beginning of this book, which like all his other works is written in Latin, and which bears the title, ‘The Delights of Wisdom concerning Conjugal Love,’¹⁸ after which follow ‘The Pleasures of Insanity concerning Scortatory Love,’ I could not think otherwise than that its author was insane. Curiosity, however, induced me to read on, and occasionally I found him uttering such thoughtful things, as I had never before heard from academic desks and pulpits, and which never before had entered my thoughts...

B. 5. Me thinks it is by no means sufficient to look upon the good and honest Swedenborg simply in the light of a madman, and meanwhile give him permission to write and print as much as he chooses...No scholar, at least not one versed in natural science, will doubt Mr. Swedenborg’s science. It does not seem to me sufficient, that a theologian who, from pride or indolence, is not willing to examine his works, should shout with a loud voice with Festus (Acts xxvi, 24), Swedenborg is beside himself, much learning has made him mad; what wisdom can be expected from a madman; or that others, who like to be considered faithful watchmen on the walls of Zion, should say superciliously, ‘The good that

¹⁸ The actual last work published by Swedenborg was *True Christian Religion*.

Swedenborg has said is old, and all the new which he says is good for nothing...'

D. 1. Dear reader, in all that precedes methinks I have given you some information deserving to be known. Judge of it yourself: for to tell you the truth, I do not know at the present moment what I ought to think of him. I am quite willing to grant that the honest man is in his second childhood; but I still believe that whoever desires to make out that he is insane, commits a sin against him.¹⁹

CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS

I have already noted that those who would attribute some form or other of insanity to Swedenborg, base their analyses on what he narrates from the spiritual world. Let me now attempt a summary view of what I would call the spiritual philosophy contained in Swedenborg's theological works. I will try to show that the presentation of the spiritual world in those works is not just a panoramic description, nor an inquisitive tourist's annotations of the personal contacts he made during his visits. Nor is it the random or disjointed report of a self-deluded visionary. Rather it is part of a broad, thorough and highly integrated theological system that stretched across the entire sweep of Swedenborg's theology. And the doctrine—if you please, the philosophy—of the spiritual world includes also the nature of the substance out of which it is formed. And that substance finds its proper part in the totality of creation, spiritual and natural, which derives its existence from the infinite Creator. The following is, in outline form, the reasoning:

1. The Infinite is the origin of everything finite.
2. The universe, though vast beyond measure, is finite, because however much you multiply parts that are finite, the result is always finite.
3. It is not possible to account for the existence of anything finite except by postulating the infinite, for the cause must ever be prior to the effect, or product.

¹⁹ Tafel, *Documents* II, 443, 461, 462, 477.

4. Two essential qualities can be discerned in the infinite: love and wisdom; for only love accounts for the will to create, and only wisdom accounts for the stupendous order by which the universe is held together and by which day and night are produced on the planets and by which, where there is life, the three kingdoms—the mineral, vegetable, and animal—are coordinated.
5. If the Infinite is infinite love and infinite wisdom, then it is infinitely Human, i.e. God is Man.
6. From the Infinite God power, “in the beginning,” went forth to produce the first, or inmost, finite—in fact, there was even prior to this a nexus between the Infinite and the finite, which was the first proceeding or outgoing, creative Love and Wisdom. This proceeding appears to angels and spirits as a sun: the Spiritual Sun, which is the immediate origin of all creation.
7. The Divine power thus proceeding covers itself with one finite form after the other, the first form by composition producing the next, and so on down to ultimate matter.
8. There is action and reaction down the descending ladder in the creative process, and a balance, or equilibrium, is maintained between the active forces in each new entity and the forces of a surrounding atmosphere.
9. The interior human organic, which is the seat of affections and thoughts, consists of finite forms that are interior to matter but are housed by the material forms of the cortex of the brain. These interior organic forms, holding a wonderful velocity within, are held together by their own atmosphere which allows for a subtle communication between human beings which is wordless and superior to speech.
10. Grosser forms surround these interior forms, and these grosser forms are receptacles of the five forms of physical sensation.
11. When the body dies, these interior forms survive and are retained (it is reasonable to assume and hope that in due course molecular physics will help us understand more fully the nature of these forms). For their survival, however, these forms depend on corresponding interior forms with mankind still on earth.

12. These interior organic forms are to be called spiritual, because they are the seat of spiritual life: will, understanding, affection, thought.
13. That the spiritual world nevertheless stretches forth in panoramic form, and that angels and spirits, having arrived from the earth, are seen in human bodies as in the world, is because of the universal laws of correspondence which are present throughout creation.
14. The spiritual world is not a dream but can be somewhat understood by means of the phenomenon of dreams. Dreams have apparent dimensions; dreams show movements from place to place; dreams experience all the five senses: yet they all take place in the seat of human consciousness which is in the brain. Dreams have no dimensions; there is no space attached to them; all physical sensations of the body are asleep.

The above, of course, is a very inadequate view of the philosophy of creation; it is only a skeletal outline. But the point, in the context of the speculations with regard to Swedenborg's state of mind, is that if no spiritual world exists, then all ideas concerning a deranged mind take on interest and validity. But if that world does exist—in fact, is the very purpose of creation, for the Divine love and wisdom aim to give eternally—then all the weapons in the hands of Swedenborg's accusers and questioners fall out of their hands.

And, of course, if such a world does not exist, then millions—perhaps billions—of people other than Swedenborg are at least deluded and deceived, even if, for lack of a reasoned conviction, they may be spared the charge of mental disorder.

Is there, or is there not, a real, spiritual world into which all human beings come after their bodily death? This is the crucial question. On the answer to it hinges not only the faith of many people in the world, but also the credibility of those who speculate concerning the state of the mind of a learned and humble philosopher, who in the theological period of his life called himself *Domini Jesu Christi Servus*. □