

Helen Keller & Swedenborg Were Confused, Part 1

Paul G. Humber, 2017

It is sad that I must turn away from Helen Keller's "religion," for I admire her in many ways. Her book, *My Religion*,¹ is full of errors. That does not mean she said nothing of value in it. Her following words, found on p152-3, warm my heart:



One day she handed me a cup and spelled the word. Then she poured some liquid into the cup and formed the letters w-a-t-e-r. She says I looked puzzled and persisted in confusing the two words, spelling cup for water and water for cup. Finally I became angry because Miss Sullivan kept repeating the words over and over again. "In despair she led me out to the ivy-covered pumphouse and made me hold the cup under the spout while she pumped. With her other hand she spelled w-a-t-e-r emphatically. I stood still, my whole body's attention fixed on the motions of her fingers as the cool stream flowed over my hand. All at once there was a strange stir within me--a misty consciousness, a sense of something remembered. It was as if I had come back to life after being dead!

I vividly remember watching my daughter, in her high school play, acting out that scene and playing the part of Helen. Tears came to my eyes. Not only did it reflect a transforming moment for Helen, but my daughter was doing a superb job of playing the part. Thus, I would rather not find fault with Helen, but I must—if I am to be true to Helen's (and my) Creator.

Before going on to error, let me embrace two other parts of Helen's book. On p88, she spoke of Jesus' "crucifixion and His resurrection." The Bible says that "if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved" (Rom 10:9). Not only did Helen seem to affirm Jesus' resurrection, but she referred to Him as Lord (twice in that same paragraph). I do not rule out, therefore, based on that verse and her grain-of-mustard-seed faith in the resurrection, that I may meet her in heaven.²

The other part is on p25, where she referred explicitly to Jonathan Edwards and recoiled from the doctrine that "countless babies ... were consigned to everlasting torment!" Edwards did indeed fail in that area. Torment in hell is NOT "everlasting" even for wicked men like Hitler. English translations of the Hebrew *olam* and the Greek *aionios* have lent support to the Platonic and false doctrine of the supposed natural "immortal soul" of man, but immortality is a gift from Christ to believers only. Jesus explicitly taught that punishment in hell is proportional (Lk 12:47-48) and terminal (Matt 28:10).

The inconsistent aspect of this is that Helen herself seemed to endorse the inherent (natural) immortality of the human soul concept. She wrote (p85), that "man has developed from a lower to a higher form, yet he has been immortal from the beginning." She even referred

¹ *My Religion*, Swedenborg Foundation, 1964 edition.

² She wrote of the cross on p149, but it was more that Jesus might become a "luminous ... [giving] life-giving thoughts" rather than shedding His blood to atone for sin.

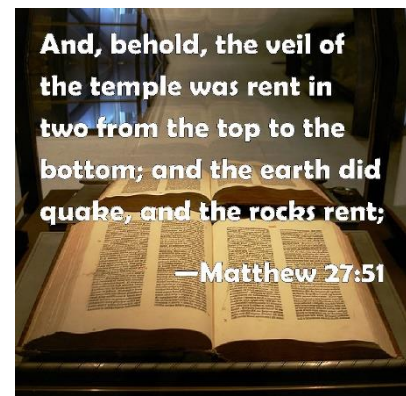
explicitly to Plato on p116. Following disobedience, however, man became mortal. Immortality only comes as a gift from Christ to those “in Him.”

Helen affirmed Darwin in several places, the first being on p53, “Swedenborg anticipated Darwin in a dozen ways.” She also affirmed Karl Marx on p57, “What Agassiz did in zoology and paleontology, Karl Marx in economics and Darwin in evolution, Swedenborg did in religion.” On p84, she implied that Swedenborg viewed “evolution [as] the divine method of creating.”

On p61, Helen seemed even to affirm Buddha (that he lived a “gentle life”) and Mahomet (that he extended his “one God” message “with fire and sword through lands given over to idolatry”)³. She even gave approval in some measure for “much of what Ingersoll [a self-professed atheist] and other critics of the Bible say about the untrustworthiness of its literal statements” (p79).

Putting far too much faith in Swedenborg, she wrote “that he was in constant intercourse with another world for more than a quarter of a century” (p63). On the next page she said that what the Apostle John saw “in symbol, Swedenborg saw in reality.” She wrote that Swedenborg’s “own testimony must convince us,” but was Helen also convinced by the testimony of Joseph Smith, the founder of Mormonism? Shouldn’t we listen to Jesus’ Apostles, trained by Him, rather than to Johnny-come-latelies like Swedenborg and Smith?

On p69, she wrote that the “Bible is the record of man’s efforts to find God,” but she was wrong. The Bible is a record of God’s efforts to rescue man from his blindness and rebellion. On p71, she wrote that Swedenborg “revealed the Holy of Holies in all its glory,” but she was in error. Jesus did that on the cross, for the veil of the temple was torn from top to bottom (Mt 27:51). Thus, Jesus (NOT Swedenborg) made it possible for us to enter “the Holy of Holies in all its glory.”



On p77, she wrote, “God is incapable even of sternness,” but the Lord Jesus said that unless we repent we will all perish (Lk 13:1-3). He also said, “Many will say to Me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?’ And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness’” (Mt 7:22-23). See also Lk 12:46.

On p82, she seems to give a pass to the higher critics of the Bible and on p116 wrote of Love as a “great Deity.”

On the second last page (p156), she preached, “Life and death are one,” and the very last sentence in her book (p157) preached that it “is out of this ape that God creates the seer, and

³ Again, on p137, she wrote with seeming approval that “Mohammed arose to overthrow idol-worship.”

the science meets spirit as life meets death, and life and death are one.” Well, as a matter of fact, death and life are diametrically opposites! Jesus claimed to be “the Life” (Jn 14:6), but He never claimed to be “the death.” In fact, the Bible speaks of death as the last enemy to be destroyed (cf. 1 Cor 15:26).

Satan deceived Eve by saying she would not die (Gen 3:4); this was another way of saying she was immortal. This poison endorsed by Plato and even Tertullian (around 200AD), is NOT the teaching of the King of kings and Lord of lords who said, “I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me will live even if he dies, and everyone who lives and believes in Me will never die” (Jn 11:25-26). Those, however, who do not entrust themselves to the saving arms of Jesus will perish. Life and death are very different—not the same—not, to use Helen’s word, “one”!

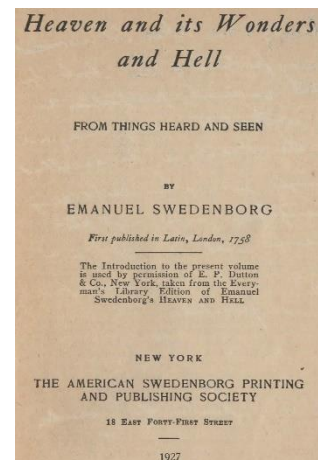
In Part 2, I quote considerably from Swedenborg’s book.

Helen Keller & Swedenborg Were Confused, Part 2

Paul G. Humber, 2017

In July of 2017, I spent considerable time going through Swedenborg’s 573-page book, *Heaven ... and Hell*. Core tenets of Christianity are either missing or majorly diminished such as 1) Christ’s crucifixion, 2) His bodily resurrection three days later, 3) redemption from sin, 4) the blood atonement, 5) the eventual bodily resurrection of everyone who has ever walked this earth, and 6) faith in Jesus alone for salvation are largely (and in some cases totally) missing.

Here are some statistics. The word “cross”, which is mentioned frequently in the New Testament, is mentioned zero times in Swedenborg’s book. Major portions of the Gospels focus on Christ’s crucifixion, and the Apostle Paul wrote, “I determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and Him crucified” (1 Cor 2:2). How many times does “crucify” or “crucifixion” appear in Swedenborg’s book? ZERO!



Is it not that important? Well, the Lord prayed to His Father in the Garden that if there be any other way for people to be saved without the cross, could He be spared from dying on one. There was no other way, so why didn’t Swedenborg mention the cross? Why is his 573-page book “crossless”?

This next statistic is utterly astounding! The Bible mentions the word “sin” 1,176 times. Swedenborg mentions “sin” ZERO times. What’s going on? Sin was so important that God the Father sent God the Son to die on a cross for sinners. The apostle Paul wrote, “But may it never be that I would boast, except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world” (Gal 6:14). I saw nowhere in Swedenborg’s book a

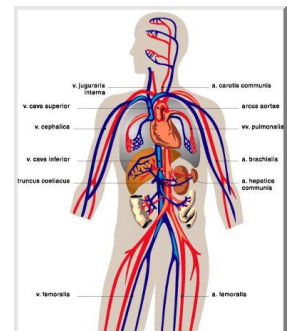
boasting “in the cross”—either from him or from angels he supposedly interviewed. The Apostle Paul wrote, “But even if we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to what we have preached to you, he is to be accursed!” (Gal 1:8).

Swedenborg taught salvation by good works, but the Apostle Paul wrote, “He saved us, **not** on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy” (Tit 3:5a). The thief on the cross had no works to boast of, but he asked Jesus (both still hanging on crosses) to remember him when He came into His Kingdom. The man was placing faith (trusting) in Jesus, and the Savior Messiah accepted that sinner!

In Swedenborg’s book, neither the word “redeem” nor “redemption” appears. The apostle Paul wrote, “All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be **adequate, equipped for every good work**” (2 Tim 3:16-17). Why then was there a need for additional revelations from Swedenborg (or from Joseph Smith, Mormonism’s founder, for that matter)?

Swedenborg wrote, “Everyone knows that the heathen as well as Christians live a moral life, and many of them a better life than Christians” (p259). Well, I am a part of “everyone”, and I believe, along with many other Christians, that no one has lived a “moral life”—except the Lord Jesus Himself.

Perhaps reflecting Plato’s error, Swedenborg taught that the “earthly body is in itself gross” (p271), but this is untrue. The human body is magnificently designed!



Swedenborg wrote, “All who have acquired intelligence and wisdom in the world are received in heaven and become angels” (p288). This is a form of Gnosticism; moreover, no one qualifies for heaven based on his/her record (except the Lord Jesus, who was and is perfect). Additionally, angels are distinct creatures from humans.

Swedenborg also diminished the importance of faith: “To all this the angels said that they knew such a tenet follows of necessity from the assumption that man is saved by faith alone, and since that tenet is the head of all the rest, and since into it, **because it is not true**, no light from heaven can flow, this is the source of the ignorance that prevails in the church at this Day” (p482).

On pages 487-8, we read, “On the contrary, to receive the life of heaven a man must needs live in the world and engage in its business and employments, and by means of a moral and civil life there receive the spiritual life. In no other way can the spiritual life be formed in man, or his spirit prepared for heaven.” This is false and fake, for the Apostle Paul wrote, “For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast” (Eph 2:8-9).

Swedenborg wrote, "...God never turns away His face from man, and never casts man away from Himself, that He casts no one into hell and is angry with no one" (p509), but the words of the Lord Jesus Himself refute this: "And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness'" (Mt 7:23).

On p560, this false prophet wrote, "There is a perpetual equilibrium between heaven and hell. From hell there continually breathes forth and ascends an endeavor to do evil...," but this denies Rev 21:4, "He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be any death; there will no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away." Swedenborg's "perpetual" and "continually" says that the conflict with evil will never end. He went on a few pages later (p564, #595), writing, "It should be known that the hells are continually assaulting heaven and endeavoring to destroy it...." This is teaching that there will be a never-ending battle between good and evil. No so! The King of the Universe has conquered over all evil, and Swedenborg was in error.

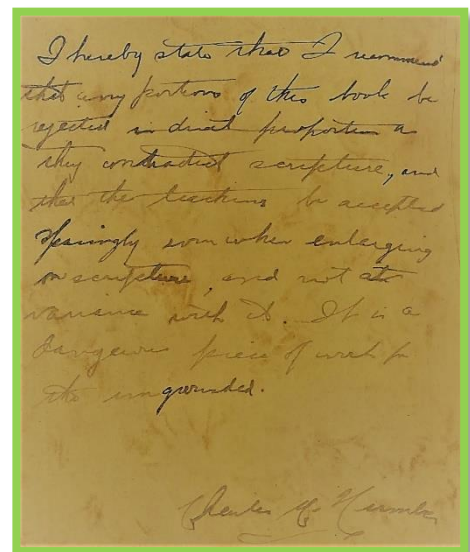
Why did I get involved in this? Did I have a bad experience with a Swedenborg disciple? No, but there are two reasons—the first relates to a command of Scripture and the second relates to my dad.

1. The Apostle Paul, who tells us to imitate him as he imitates Christ, wrote, "We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ" (2 Cor 10:5). I have tried to bring Swedenborg's thoughts "captive to the obedience of Christ."

2. My dad, Dr. Charles M. Humber, left me his Swedenborg's book, titled, *Heaven and its Wonders and Hell* (a 1927 Swedenborg publication). On the inside front cover, he, who himself earned five degrees from Harvard, Columbia, Toronto, Boston U, and McMaster U, wrote:

I hereby state that I recommend that any portions of this book be rejected in direct proportion as they → contradict scripture, and that the teachings be → → accepted sparingly even when enlarging on the → scripture, and not at variance with it. It is a dangerous piece of work for the ungrounded. Charles M Humber

Dr. Humber served in Baptist pastorates in Ontario, Quebec, Massachusetts (Boston), New Jersey, and Pennsylvania (Philadelphia). In response to words in the Introduction (p. vi), "Unlike Swedenborg we have to be taught not by experience but by his report of his own experience", my father wrote in the margin, "So we must accept his say so ... that of one mortal man. Absurd"

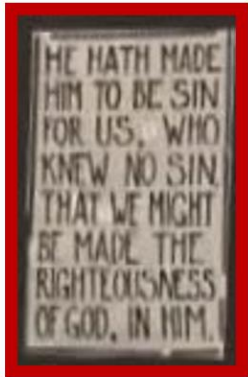


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Charles M. Humber

On page 378, Swedenborg wrote, "... neither is there any feeling of fatigue," but my father responded, "It is this that makes me skeptical. It would seem philosophically true and more reasonable if he had felt fatigue. Now it seems like a dream – was it? [signed] Charles M. Humber"

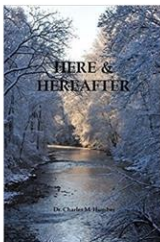
Are you trusting Swedenborg or Creator Christ? Jesus warned about sin and hell and promised a future resurrection and judgment for everyone (Jn 5:28-29, Mt 25:41-46). Are you going to believe a mere mortal or the One who conquered death?



85 years ago (1932), my father, Dr. Charles M. Humber, preached for a summer in Little Current, Ontario (on Manitoulin Island), but you can see today (2017) his extremely important message. I have enlarged the signboard



(his graphic—see above and near the church building)→ so that you can see what he put on it. It is a verse from the Bible (2 Cor 5:21). GOD THE FATHER "HATH MADE" JESUS "TO BE SIN FOR US." JESUS "KNEW NO SIN." Why



did He go to the cross? SO THAT "WE MIGHT BE MADE THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD **IN HIM**." You should get "**IN HIM**"! Jesus' Garment of Righteousness must be over your shoulders, and it is received by faith **IN HIM**. Has Jesus washed away your sins? Ask Him in prayer to wash away your sins. Then ask HIM to clothe you in HIS Perfect Robe of Righteousness. Being in Jesus is a zillion time more important than winning the lottery. Why? Eternal Life with Jesus is of infinite value. Yes, the picture is of Dad inside the small building for worship. Write to me if you would like a copy of Dad's book about this life and the next. [Dad went to be with Jesus in 1988.] Son Paul G. Humber.