

CHINA MISSION NEWSLETTER

MISSIONARY:

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Dear brethren:

God's word is powerful. When combined with patient perseverance and delivered "in a spirit of gentleness," the Word has the power to "restore" the erring brother or sister (Galatians 6:1).

About two years ago, we baptized a brother who was quite faithful for almost a year. Then, he stopped coming for over a year. Perhaps it was his difficulty in accepting the harder statements of our Lord that precipitated his departure. The exclusiveness of the teachings of Christ and the truth that Christianity is the only true hope for a lost and dying world seemed to trouble him. Whatever the full nature of the cause, he left the assembly of his brethren and started attending some denominational church. We continued sharing material with him. We reasoned with him from the Scriptures when we would see him. We were very direct, but spoke with gentleness. Even though he had departed, he would occasionally turn to us for scriptural answers to refute some point of contention he had with his newly acquired church. He obviously still held a measure of regard for the Bible as the standard of truth, and a confidence in us to give him the biblical proof that he needed to answer these people. Interpreting this as reason for hope, we continued to work with him.

More recently, one of his greatest influences for error came from the 1st century writings of Emanuel Swedenborg, "a Swedish Lutheran theologian, scientist, philosopher and mystic. He is best known for his book on the afterlife, Heaven and Hell."

Swedenborg had a prolific career as an inventor and scientist. In 1741, at 53, he entered into a spiritual phase in which he began to experience dreams and visions, beginning on Easter Weekend, on 6 April 1744. It culminated in a 'spiritual awakening' in which he received a revelation that he was appointed by the Lord Jesus Christ to write The Heavenly Doctrine to reform Christianity. According to The Heavenly Doctrine, the Lord had opened Swedenborg's spiritual eyes so that from then on, he could freely visit heaven and hell to converse with angels, demons and other spirits and the Last Judgment had already occurred the year before, in 1757. ~From Wikipedia

For some reason our brother was captivated by this prolific writer of error who claimed

to have ascended into heaven, talked with Jesus and angels, and received revelation to be given to all mankind. I reminded him that the apostle Paul talked with Jesus on the Damascus road (Acts 9 & 22). Moreover, Paul "was caught up to the third heaven ... and heard inexpressible words, which a man is not permitted to speak" (2 Corinthians 12: 1-6). Paul even raised the dead and healed the sick (Acts 20:7-12; 28:7-10). Peter also raised the dead and healed the lame (Acts 9:3.643; 3:1-9). Furthermore, all the apostles were guided "into all the truth" (John 16:12-15). Since "all the truth" was revealed to them, none was left to be revealed by Swedenborg or any of the many others who have made similar claims. With the embodiment of revelation that we know as the New Testament, "...His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness ... (2 Peter 1:3). Notice that it says "everything pertaining to life and godliness." There will be no fourth age, nothing beyond these "last days" except the Judgment and eternity. We have it all; we have the completed and confirmed Word; we have the "teleios" of 1 Corinthians 13. Should we discard the miraculously confirmed Word for an empty claim? Our brother is impressed by Swedenborg's scientific achievements, however, Intelligence Quotient is not always directly proportional with Spiritual Quotient Einstein was a genius; Should we all follow his religious suit? Thankfully, our brother is once again attending every service, even all three nights of a recent gospel meeting. He stated that he has decided that our assembly is the church he wants to be with. He added emphatically, "This is the church where I will come." Pray for his continued resolve.

Your servant in Christ,

Eugene F. Brzozowski

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