

Sketch of an
Ecclesiastical History
of the
New Church

1770

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Sketch of an Ecclesiastical History of the New Church

1. A new ecclesiastical history must be written, because now is the Lord's advent predicted in Matthew 24.

2. The church was different before the Council of Nice, as long as the Apostles' creed was in force.

It became changed after the Council of Nice, and still more after the Athanasian creed was composed.

The cardinal point of doctrine respecting the triune God and the Lord was subverted in the church, especially by the dogma of three [Divine] persons from eternity.

3. The books are to be enumerated which were written, from the beginning to the present day, by the Lord through me [*a Domino per me*].

4. The writing there is such that it shines brightly before those who believe in the Lord and in the new revelation; but it appears dark and of no consequence to those who deny them, and who are not in favor of them on account of various external reasons.

Experimental proofs that their style of writing is such: (1) From the Dutch censors of books who were called together in the world of spirits; one of whom upon reading these books said that they were preferable to all other books, except the Word; and another said that he saw nothing in them except vain, novel, and fantastical things, and that therefore they were to be rejected as of no account. (2) The same thing happened in England, where they were sent to the universities, because the ecclesiastical order had rejected them. (3) About those in Gottenberg: Beyer, Rosen, and the others; although some see the greatness of God in them, others see nothing except what is utterly worthless. (4) In Sweden [they are looked upon in one way] by Filenius, and in a different way altogether by others, who may perhaps be named. (5) When I read to myself the writings which I had printed, they appeared to me vain, as long as a

certain cunning and sinister one was present, but it was different in the presence of others. (6) The same thing took place in Sweden with him, who is writing a literary history. Besides other instances.

5. About Oetinger, in Wurtemberg, from his letter.

6. About Gottingen.

7. When *Brief Exposition* was published, the angelic heaven from the east to the west, and from the south to the north, appeared of a deep scarlet color with the most beautiful flowers. This took place before myself, and before the kings of Denmark and others.

At another time it appeared flamy, most beautiful.

8. In the spiritual world there was inscribed on all these books, "The Lord's Advent." The same I also wrote by command on two copies in Holland.³⁵

35. One of these copies has been found. On the inside page of the wrapper which is bound up with the volume there is the following inscription in Swedenborg's own handwriting:

HIC LIBER EST ADVENTUS DOMINI,	(2513)
SCRIPTUM EX MANDATO	{4535}
	{6895}
	(8427, p. 19)

[This book is the Lord's Advent, written by command.]

In another hand is inserted A.R., n. 626.

See *Documents Concerning Swedenborg*, Vol. 2, Pt. 2, pages 756–757.
[—Translator]