

EDITORIAL REMARKS

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In June 2015, at the invitation of Ray Silverman to a gathering at his home, friends of Bryn Athyn College had the pleasure of meeting Stephen Jones—president of Antioch University New England, a graduate school—to hear him talk about his philosophy as it applies to his school and to tell us about the influence of Swedenborgian thought in its development. In the Abstract of his article “Spiritual Underpinnings of Nature-based Leadership” Dr. Jones says :

Eighteenth Century Swedish scientist, philosopher, and theologian, Emanuel Swedenborg (1688–1772) adopted a central philosophical tenet—that the entire natural world comprises a series of physical symbols that correspond to a deeper spiritual reality. That is, nature embodies all lessons of life’s physical and spiritual essence. I will explore reflections on how, likewise, our natural world offers powerful truths applicable to living, learning, serving, and leading.

Ideas found in Swedenborg’s writings have found their way into the thinking of large numbers of people, including that of notable writers. Early attention to the possibility of these ideas entering the pages of at least one of Charles Dickens’s works is found in a 1951 issue of *New Church Life*. Mary Lutze, in her article “Swedenborg’s Enduring Influence: The Resurfacing of *Heaven and Hell* in Charles Dickens’s *A Christmas Carol*,” presents a strong case in support of the idea that Dickens’s encounter with *Heaven and Hell* played a significant role in the writing of his widely known and much loved work.

At least in Western literature, exploration of the nature of the human mind began in classical Greek times. In recent time, Hugo Odhner’s *The Human Mind, Its faculties and Degrees* (Swedenborg Scientific Association, 1969, 1984) and Doug Taylor’s *Inner levels of the Mind* (Swedenborg Foundation, 2015) provide Swedenborgian views on the subject. An historical perspective on it is provided in Reuben Bell’s “Swedenborg’s Mind,” originally published as an essay in Doug Taylor’s work and reprinted here.