

NOTES BY THE EDITOR

There is remarkable agreement between the doctrine of correspondences formulated by Swedenborg in his philosophical works and the doctrine of correspondence revealed by the Lord through him in the theological writings. The agreement is so striking that Robert Hindmarsh regarded *Hieroglyphic Key*, in which Swedenborg's doctrine is developed, as an "introduction to the science of correspondences," and suggested that it perhaps contained "sufficient evidence of Divine inspiration"; and he was not alone among early students of the Writings in supposing that *Hieroglyphic Key* was written during the early period of Swedenborg's illumination. This view could not be sustained, however, either on the basis of internal evidence or on that of bibliographical fact. Yet the resemblances remain; and if it is interesting to note wherein the two doctrines agree, it is important that those whose interest is primarily in the theological writings should see the distinction between the two doctrines of correspondence.

Four main points of agreement may be noted. *First*, the correspondences given in the theological writings are essentially the same as, or similar to, those laid down in the philosophical works; quite apart from those correspondences which are a matter of common perception, and which have become part of everyday speech, the correspondences in *Hieroglyphic Key* are, in many instances, the same as those given later in the Writings. *Second*, both in Swedenborg's own doctrine and in the revealed one, correspondence is presented as a living, causal relation—as the dynamic relation between the spiritual world and the natural, and hence between spiritual cause and natural effect—and not as a merely harmonious relationship. *Third*, Swedenborg saw, as was to be revealed to him later, that there is a trine in correspondence; that correspondence relates end in the Divine, cause in the spiritual world and therefore in the human mind, and effect in the natural world. His correspondences are given in threefold series: nature, the human mind, God; effect in nature, end in human minds, the end of ends or the love of our salvation in God; direction in nature, intention in the mind, disposition in God; the natural sun, the soul, the sun of wisdom or God. *Four*, in the philosophical works, as

in the theological writings, it is taught that causes produce effects discretely, thus that correspondents are related by discrete degrees, and that a knowledge of discrete degrees is prerequisite to a knowledge and understanding of correspondences.

Nevertheless it is not to be thought that the doctrine delivered in the theological works is merely an extension of the one formulated by Swedenborg himself; still less that Swedenborg simply incorporated his own doctrine in the theological works in order to invest it with Divine authority! If the two doctrines are essentially in agreement, they are also entirely distinct; for, in the terms of the doctrine itself, they are related, not by continuous degrees, but discretely. Thus the difference is more than that the doctrine is more fully developed in the theological works, that in them it treats more especially of interior things, or even that the doctrine is confirmed by experience in the spiritual world.

The fundamental difference between the doctrine of correspondences offered by Swedenborg and the doctrine of correspondence given through him is that which exists between human philosophy and Divine revelation—between philosophic doctrine and Divine doctrine. Swedenborg's own doctrine is presented as the formulation of a law which he has discerned through profound study and long observation; it is not the result of immediate Divine inspiration but the product of keen but human intuition, guided by experience and led by reason. The result is that there is only a general view of the realm into which the application of the law of correspondence was to lead. But the doctrine delivered in the Writings is a Divine revelation; and in its disclosure Swedenborg was enabled to see fully and in the light of heaven that which he had glimpsed in a general way and in intellectual light. Even where the knowledges are the same, Swedenborg's doctrine represents a human formulation of them, whereas the later doctrine is the result of a Divine ordering of those knowledges.

Despite the fundamental difference between them, however, the two doctrines are related in another way. The one is natural, the other Divine; yet if Swedenborg had not acquired the knowledge that enabled him to formulate his own doctrine he would not have been prepared to receive the Divine doctrine. As it was, his doctrine served as a natural-rational basis for the revealed doctrine.