

EDITORIAL NOTES

Swedenborg's Concept of Love in Action, A Study of the Ethics of Emanuel Swedenborg (1688-1772), by William Ross Woofenden, published in two installments as the October 1969 and January 1970 issues of the NEW PHILOSOPHY, was written as a thesis offered in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a Master's Degree at St. Louis University.

Mr. Woofenden is Pastor of the Church of the Open Word, a church of the General Convention in St. Louis, Missouri. Because of an oversight by the Editor this information was not added at the time of publication.

Mr. Leon S. Rhodes has called the Editor's attention to many phrases in the study as printed that do not seem to reflect the attitude of an affirmative reader of the Writings. Both Mr. Rhodes and the Editor have talked with the author of the articles and note that Mr. Woofenden does indeed have such an affirmative attitude. However, since the study was written as a University thesis, certain conditions were imposed upon the writer that affected its form and made it differ from what would have been the case if the study had been prepared for a New Church audience. The Editor thanks Mr. Woofenden for permission to use the study and Mr. Rhodes for his constructive criticism.

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Mr. Lennart O. Alfelt has called the attention of the Editor to Inge Jonsson's *Swedenborgs Korrespondenslära* [Swedenborg's Doctrine of Correspondence], 393 pp., a book in the series of Stockholm Studies in History of Literature, published by Almqvist and Wiksell, Stockholm. Although the main work is not available in English, Dr. Jonsson has prepared a summary of it which is translated by Norman Sjöman and bound with the book itself. This summary appears in the present number of the NEW PHILOSOPHY, and we of the Editorial Staff express our thanks to the author for permission to publish it.

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Inge Jonsson received his doctorate in Stockholm in 1961. His thesis was on Swedenborg's *Worship and Love of God*, and for it he later received the Warburg prize from the Royal Academy of Arts and Letters for the best thesis in the history of literature during a three-year period. In addition to the thesis and the work for which "The Summary" was written, Jonsson has written a third book on Swedenborg which has been translated into English and is expected to be published soon in the United States. At present Jonsson is a full-time research docent at *Statens humanistiska forskningsråd* [The Swedish Governmental Board of Humanistic Research]. His present research is on a study of the Carolingian renaissance and a manual of theories of literature.

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The article summarizes a text of 313 pages. Its condensed style whets one's appetite for what is in that text. The Editor is tempted to give a long list of subjects that stirred his interest in this respect. However, the reader will come up with his own list. One or two items will, however, be noted.

There is, for example, the strong dependence of Swedenborg upon Wolff pictured by the author. Some years ago Hugo Lj. Odhner wrote an article discussing this dependence. (See "Christian Wolff and Swedenborg," *NEW PHILOSOPHY*, Oct. 1951, pp. 237-251). Also, reference might be made to Alfred Acton's opening paragraph of his Translator's Preface to Swedenborg's *Psychologica* (1923).

Also to be noted from the summary is the emphasis on the relation of Swedenborg's background to Cartesianism culminating in the last paragraph of the Summary with the words, "In the last analysis, he (Swedenborg) remains a devoted pupil to modernity's great master, Descartes, who built a fundament for heaven and earth on his own psychic experiences."

That student-master relation might be brought into better focus by a study of the relative importance of anatomical studies to Descartes and to Swedenborg. It was in Swedenborg's anatomical studies that he found numerous illustrations of discrete degrees during his philosophical period. It is in the relation between discrete degrees that the doctrine of correspondence comes into full importance. What was the nature of Descartes' anatomical studies? What was the relation of these studies to his philosophy?

As for the relevance of Descartes' "psychic experiences," how much is known about these? Swedenborg's spiritual experiences are on full display in over thirty volumes, insofar as words can display them.

A matter that is of quite a different sort from Swedenborg's relation to the philosophers is brought out in the following:

In his earliest exegetic manuscripts, we meet the apostolic thesis on the church as Christ's bride and among the earliest notes in the *Spiritual Diary*, Swedenborg speaks of Christ's body as heaven. When his theological view was developed in its complete anthropomorphic boldness, Christ became nothing more than a *Divinum Humanum*, God's human aspect, and the prince of the world from *De Cultu et Amore Dei* and the earliest parts of *Adversaria* disappeared completely.

The phrase "nothing more than a *Divinum Humanum*" might come as a shock to one who places emphasis upon the distinctiveness of New Church doctrine. But in this we go from things philosophical to things theological.

A very interesting idea is set forth in the words "the central idea of the doctrine of correspondence [is] the thesis that there does not exist anything in nature which is not a representative of something spiritual." It might be thought that the internal sense of the Bible is the central idea. Although the internal sense given in the *Arcana Coelestia* is new, the general idea is involved in the word "exegesis" in common use in language. This word, however, is seldom if ever used by New Church men with reference to Swedenborg's Writings because of the distinctive nature those Writings give to the internal sense of the Word. The correspondence between the natural and spiritual worlds, however, seems to be peculiar to the Writings in a unique way. This correspondence becomes known as the Writings unfold in their completeness. This therefore might be the new thing appearing to a scholar seeking sources.

Jonsson's study can be useful to stimulate readers of Swedenborg by sharpening their own understanding and by forcing a confrontation with ideas that are generated in an independent mind.

For Swedenborg to be the Servant of the Lord, it was necessary that he be prepared. He was in fact prepared within the culture of the University of Upsala. This culture was in fact affected by Descartes when Swedenborg was a student, and Wolff's influence continued to increase for some years thereafter. Yet, Swedenborg

as early as 1710 began to have direct relation to other thought, for example, Newtonian. By 1738 his travels had brought him into direct contact with the thought of the continent, in France and in Italy. This thought was experimental as well as rationalistic. It impressed itself upon Swedenborg, the man, to such an extent that the Writings could be written down within the powers of his intellect. Thus there is an importance in Dr. Jonsson's phrase which contains the concluding words of his "Summary": ". . . he [Swedenborg] does not scruple to revise and change that which was said to originate *ex auditu et visu*." It is of importance that such changes were permitted. For if his intelligence was in any way involved (as is clearly implied by "being prepared") his intelligence must have functioned in some way.

Enough has been said to indicate that the "Summary" will stimulate the reader of Swedenborg to clarify his views of many things by going back to the Writings themselves. We say "the Writings" rather than "the philosophical works," because it is in the Writings that the doctrine of correspondences is fully developed through the means of things heard and seen.

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With reference to the use by Swedenborg of Scipion Duplex *Corps de Philosophie* noted by Jonsson, Mr. Alfelt, Curator of Swedenborgiana at the Academy of the New Church, notes the existence of a copy of this work in that collection. It contains hand-written notes by Alfred Acton dating back to the 1920's, cross-referencing quotations used by Swedenborg in the *Economy of the Animal Kingdom*.

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We are fortunate in having an article for this issue by Dr. Hugo Lj. Odhner. It is especially timely because it complements the Jonsson "Summary," being explicitly devoted to the Doctrine of Correspondences as that doctrine is presented in the Writings.

Early in the article, Dr. Odhner distinguishes between correspondences and representatives, and refers also to a deeper relation known as significatives. With only this brief comment the Editor commends this article to the reader since Dr. Odhner is already well-known as a contributor to NEW PHILOSOPHY on many topics over a period of many years.