

TRANSACTIONS OF THE EIGHTY-THIRD ANNUAL MEETING

Swedenborg Scientific Association

The eighty-third annual meeting of the Swedenborg Scientific Association was held in Pendleton Hall, Bryn Athyn, Pennsylvania, on Monday, May 5, 1980. The meeting was called to order at 8:00 p.m. by the President, Mr. Charles S. Cole.

The minutes of the eighty-second annual meeting were accepted as printed in the July-September, 1979 issue of *The New Philosophy*.

Mr. Cole expressed thanks to the three members leaving the Board, Mr. Tomas Spiers, Mr. Joel Pitcairn, and Mr. Martin Echols, for their contributions with special appreciation of Mr. Spiers' many years of service.

Mr. Erland J. Brock, Chairman of the Nominating Committee, nominated the following for election to the Board of Directors:

Mr. E. Boyd Asplundh
Dr. Gregory L. Baker
Mr. Erland J. Brock
Mr. Michael A. Brown
Dr. Grant R. Doering

Mr. Donald C. Fitzpatrick, Jr.
Rev. Daniel W. Goodenough
Mr. Jerome V. Sellner
Rev. Dr. William R. Woofenden

The candidates were elected by a unanimous vote.

Mr. Brock, after calling on the Vice President to temporarily chair the meeting, then nominated Mr. Charles S. Cole for re-election as President. Mr. Cole was elected and resumed the chair.

The report of the Board of Directors was presented by the Secretary and was accepted with thanks.

The Treasurer's report was read and was accepted with thanks.

The Editor's report was read and was accepted with thanks.

The Publicity report was read and was accepted with thanks.

Mr. Cole then introduced the speaker, Mr. Martin M. Echols, who gave an address entitled "The Cortical Gland and its Relationship to the Modern Neuron" (see p. 104)

Discussion and questions followed the address. Dr. Grant Doering asked what the embryological origin of the glial cell was. Mr. Echols replied that, starting with the neural tube, neurons are the first to divide. Cells expand away from the tube to form the brain, some of these cells never to divide again (ultimately becoming

neurons). Glial cells are with the neurons, but do not move outward in the developing brain until the neural cells have.

The Reverend Norman Reuter noted that Mr. Echols had said in discussing the three degrees of fibers, that they were all in the same order, while he understood that one level was infinitely smaller than the next. Mr. Echols replied that the fiber of each degree is a composite of fibers of the previous degree, and that there are discrete degrees of fibers which communicate but are not continuous, although they are close in size. The cortical gland and the artery which joins it form a continuous circle of fluids, but the blood vessels in the neuron are discrete.

Mr. Erland J. Brock noted that in looking at the structure of inorganic things, we think in terms of atomic theory—angular or geometric shapes, but when looking at biological tissue, fiber is the thing. We should focus more on fibers than atoms or molecules. Tonight's presentation had helped him better understand Swedenborg's discussion of various forms in his work on the fiber. He then asked what kind of fluids were in the nerve cells and what was the function of the glial cells. Mr. Echols could not answer the first question, but to the second he replied that one function of the glial cells is to stop certain substances from entering the brain. They also serve to transfer fluids between the neuron and the capillary.

Mr. Lee Woofenden noted that two types of degrees seemed to have been mentioned: those of magnitude (smaller and larger fibers) and those of the fibers themselves within the cortical gland, on the same level of magnitude. Mr. Echols said that there are three degrees of the cortical gland by way of compounding. It is difficult to understand Swedenborg's statement that the whole body is woven from one simple fiber.

Mr. Michael A. Brown noted that, while the principles which Swedenborg postulated are being confirmed today, we will never see a thought or affection on the screen—the cortical gland includes something beyond what the microscope shows, and tonight's slides helped show how this could be possible.

Mr. Edward F. Allen noted three things about the presentation which had impressed him: 1) The emphasis, not on Swedenborg's anticipation of modern science, but rather on his work in relation to the science of his day. In the *Economy* Swedenborg himself as much as states that he was not a scientist but that his was a search for the soul. 2) The emphasis on trying to see examples of discrete degrees. The most important chapter he knows on philosophy is the *Introduction to Rational Psychology*, for in this is the basis on which a

search for the soul is possible: the doctrine of series and degrees or of order. We must recognize that Swedenborg saw examples of discrete degrees in the science of his day, and try to do the same in ours. 3) The fact that even with increasing magnification of the slides, the detail did not cease. That system of fibers, if stretched out, would reach to the moon and back, which means that there is an incredible number of possible variations within each brain. That system must be there for a purpose.

Mr. William Fehon noted that as far as we know, the process of conduction of impulses across fibers is the same for every neuron, but there are many possible fibers for those impulses to travel on.

The Reverend Daniel W. Goodenough expressed appreciation as a non-biologist, noting that both the philosophical and the theological works of Swedenborg present a fiber theory of the human body. The fiber is the ultimate of a spiritual endeavor—the spiritual effort sends something out to do a job through the fibers. It was thrilling to see the slides of fibers. Mr. Echols then mentioned that in a recent course his instructor had discussed the importance of fibers outside the cell in the development of the embryo. When the embryo grows, cells migrate, and it is possible that they do so by following fibers laid down by cells.

Mr. Richard Goerwitz III expressed appreciation as a young person in the Church for this kind of presentation. Tonight's paper had shown the infinite resources the brain has, and in the Church we are able to see causes behind such things. It is interesting to see how we are getting away from simply proving that Swedenborg's scientific theories were correct, and are doing more to understand nature by a scientific method.

There being no further discussion, Mr. Cole declared the meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,
Hilary Pitcairn, *Secretary*

ANNUAL REPORT

Swedenborg Scientific Association, May 5, 1980

Since the last Annual Meeting, the Board of Directors has held four meetings: on April 30 and October 9, 1979, and on February 12 and May 5, 1980.

At the meeting of April 30, 1979, the following officers were elected:

Vice-President

Secretary

Treasurer

Editor

Mr. Prescott A. Rogers

Miss Hilary Pitcairn

Mr. E. Boyd Asplundh

Mr. Lennart O. Alfelt

At the other meetings the following topics were discussed and, where appropriate, acted upon.

1. Program and arrangements for the Annual Meeting.
2. New typesetting facilities at Cairncrest.
3. The printing of articles which are too long for *The New Philosophy* as separate monographs.
4. Publicity efforts, Mr. Sellner being active as head of publicity.
5. How to make use of the increasing interest among Academy students in scholarship.
6. Nominations policies, changes in nominating procedures being approved.
7. Means of continuing having a member of Convention on the Board of Directors.
8. Support of study projects, procedures and methods of remuneration being reviewed.
9. Project on the Brain, under Mr. Michael Brown, which is near completion.

Respectfully submitted,
Hilary Pitcairn, *Secretary*

EDITOR'S REPORT

Another year has quickly passed by. Too quickly, it would seem, for the realization of our often-expressed desire to have *The New Philosophy* come out within the quarter printed on the front cover. We on the "inside" know how close we often have been to accomplishing the desired goal only to have our hopes dashed by some happening more or less out of our control, leaving us at the wayside watching the due-date pass by. I had hoped to have the first issue of 1980 out on time for this meeting. Obviously it did not work out. However, the issue *is* on the press now and should be mailed in about a week.

In a note in the July issue of 1979 I wrote about some changes taking place in regard to our journal. I said then that we did not

intend to "drastically redesign" it. We have changed our minds somewhat and will introduce some major changes beginning with the January 1980 issue. Thus the cover will be completely redesigned. The front cover will be in two colors with a facsimile illustration of one of Swedenborg's significant drawings. There will be a new title page combining the title, other data, and a table of contents on the same page. We have also chosen a different typeface called *Palatino* or *Andover*. It is close to the face we have been using in the last two issues but it seems a little easier to read and more pleasant to the eye. Finally, block quotes, which have routinely been set in smaller type, will be set in the same type size as the rest of the text. We hope this will make nicer-looking pages and easier reading.

In the January 1980 issue we are also introducing a new occasional section called "Translators' Corner." It is designed for scholarly studies, communications between, and information for those who are involved in editing and translating Swedenborg's works and other works of importance to our Association and sister organizations. But we are hoping that this section will be of interest also to other readers and a help in fostering a broad understanding and support for the important work of editing and translation.

We hope that these changes will prove acceptable to our readers and beneficial to the journal and its purposes.

As in many previous years I have had great assistance in publishing the journal from Messrs. E. Boyd Asplundh, Donald C. Fitzpatrick, Jr. and Kenneth Rose, for which I am grateful.

Lennart O. Alfelt, *Editor*

TREASURER'S REPORT

for year ending April 30, 1980

BALANCE APRIL 30, 1979 \$15,466.14

Plus Receipts 1979/80

Dues	\$ 389.00
Subscriptions	90.80
Contributions	7,767.48
Book Sales	1,011.80*
Dividends and Interest	2,279.86
McCallip Bequest	4,859.58
Sale Gulf Oil Shares	<u>25,072.40</u>
	\$41,470.92

Less Expenses 1979/80

NEW PHILOSOPHY (4 issues)	\$ 4,606.80
Editorial Expenses	309.21
Research	1,902.25
Misc. Office Expenses	117.30
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	\$ 6,935.56

BALANCE APRIL 30, 1980 \$50,001.50

*Includes \$1,009.20 received June 5, 1979 on account of books sold by the General Church Book Center from May 1, 1978 to April 30, 1979.

THE CORTICAL GLAND AND ITS RELATIONSHIP TO THE MODERN NEURON

Martin M. Echols

In discussing the relationship between the modern concept of brain cells and the cortical gland as described by Swedenborg, it is not my intention to demonstrate the correctness of his concept nor to give the reader one more example of Swedenborg's anticipation of modern research.

The interest which I have in the subject of the cortical gland stems from such statements, found in the Writings, as:

They who know these things (concerning the fibers) either from the study of the science of anatomy or from those skilled in it, can see that the beginnings of life are nowhere else than the commencements of the fibers themselves....[DLW 366]

and also:

What a man thinks, goes through the fibers from their beginnings (in the brain) to their ends; this is the source of the senses. [HH 212]

There is no question that fibers exist and that the soul operates into the body by means of them. It is our desire, however, to study the science of anatomy that we may actually see the operation of the