

## *News, Notes, and Comments*

Our sister publishers The Swedenborg Society and the Swedenborg Foundation have published a number of books in 2011 and 2012 that make for very good reading and contribute significantly to the body of literature by or about Swedenborg, or that represent the application of the ideas expressed in his works.

*Gardens of Heaven and Earth.* By Kristin King. Swedenborg Society, 2011. Hardcover, with 13pp. Introduction and 128pp. text with index, and with three sections: I. Garden correspondence; II. Gardens in heaven; and III. Gardens in history.

This is a delightful read. In Section II, on gardens in heaven, where we might expect to find a lot of detail about them, the author says “Swedenborg will not dwell on details or give specific information . . . He deals rather in the most general terms . . . (pp. 17–18).” And on page 19,

In place of the disappointment of not experiencing something more substantial and vivid from the eyewitness account of a person who spent more than a quarter of a century in heaven, we have the strange comfort of being forced back upon our own experience and imagination. (p. 19)

Thus, perhaps contrary to our expectations, the book is far more about our personal-, or collectively, our historical-selves, than it is about the appearance of gardens in heaven.

This work is available from the Amazon Kindle Store. Josephine Appelgren’s review of it is available in the Swedenborg Society Newsletter online. The book is available at <http://store.newchurch.org> (\$19.95) and [www.swedenborg.org.uk](http://www.swedenborg.org.uk) (£9.95), [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com).

Carl Robsohm’s *Memoirs of Swedenborg, and Other Documents*. Revised translations, introduction and annotations: Anders Hallengren, is “the second in a series of historical studies and other literary texts exploring the life, influence, and thoughts of the Swedish mystic and philosopher Emanuel Swedenborg (1678–1772).” Series editor: Stephen McNeilly.

Swedenborg Society, 2011. ISBN:978-0-85448-168-2, hardcover, with 36pp. front matter and 136pp. text.

The front matter includes a 2-page Chronology of Swedenborg, and a Foreword and Introduction by Anders Hallengren. Then follow chapters I–IX: I. Memoirs of Swedenborg *Carl Robsahm*. II. Reply to a letter from a friend *Emanuel Swedenborg*. III. A truthful account of the late Queen Dowager at Haga in 1774 *Anders von Hopken*. IV. From the *Proceedings of the Exegetic and Philanthropic Society* in Stockholm. V. Memoranda in the Notebook of 1747–8 *Emanuel Swedenborg*. VI. Description of the late Assessor, Mr. Emanuel Swedenborg's Estate at Södermalm. VII. A list of valuables of 1770 *Emanuel Swedenborg*. VIII. A visit to Swedenborg's home *Carl Christoffer Gjöwell*. IX. Testimony *Christian de Tuxen*. The book closes with Index.

On the copyright page we read "The documents contained in this volume were first published by R. L. Tafel in his *Documents Concerning the Life and Character of Emanuel Swedenborg* (London Swedenborg Society, 1875–7)."

Collectively, the documents selected give a very good sense of the character and personal life of Swedenborg. They are very much enriched by Anders Hallengren's Foreword and Introduction and as well as by his annotations that accompany them.

Overall, this is a very enlightening and enjoyable book to read. Available at <http://store.newchurch.org> (\$15.95), [www.swedenborg.org.uk](http://www.swedenborg.org.uk), [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com)

*Stay by Me, Roses: The Life of American Artist Alice Archer Sewall James, 1870–1955*. By Alice Blackmer Skinner. Swedenborg Foundation Press, 2011. ISBN: 978-0-87785-338-1, paperback, 252pp.

This wonderful book about the life of "Archie" Sewall James is structured in three parts—I, Shaping an Artistic Life; II, Coping with Adversity; III, A Proper Blooming—made so by the author's treatment of the various aspects of the life and character of Archie. The late Alice Skinner was close to the Sewall family in her childhood, as recounted in her Preface: "As a child I had collected many memories of the James family and their hometown, Urbana. But when I began to research Archie's life, I discovered how little I actually knew her . . . The interpretations of Archie's life are my

own, based on her letters and writings and drawn from descriptions of her by friends, students, and family” (p. xiv).

Archie was the eldest of five daughters in the family of the Reverend Frank and Thedia Sewall, parents who provided a richly nurturing environment for the girls, as described in chapter 1. Chapter 2 opens with “To Archie, the experiences of growing up in the Sewall family were treasures to be called upon throughout her life” (p. 17).

I could go on, but simply note that beyond the influence he had on his family and the New Church, and the vision he had for New Church education as expressed in his years as President of Urbana University, Rev. Frank Sewall, D.D. was the driving force in the creation of the Swedenborg Scientific Association (see C.E. Doering in *The New Philosophy*, July–December 2006, “A History of the Swedenborg Scientific Association”). And for a review of *Stay By Me, Roses* by Soni Soneson Werner, see Book Reviews in *Theta Alpha Journal*, April 12 (p. 26). Available at: <http://store.newchurch.org> (\$15.95), [www.swedenborg.org.uk](http://www.swedenborg.org.uk), [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com)

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