

EDITORIAL NOTES

Our treasurer has written letters recently to a number of individuals who might be interested in supporting the uses of the Swedenborg Scientific Association by joining its membership. In recent times the publication of books by the Association has been supported by special private contributions. However, the present feeling of our administrative officers is that the Association should be self supporting as to its operating expenses, the main item of which is the publication of the *NEW PHILOSOPHY*. A rather small increase in membership at \$3.00 per member would make this possible.

Your editor saw the list of those to whom the letters were sent. On it were several people who have been critical of the Association and of the sort of material contained in the *NEW PHILOSOPHY*.

It reminded the editor that there is another way to support the Association—perhaps the most important way—and that is by submitting material to be considered for publication. We hope some of the critics will be encouraged by these remarks to support the Association through manuscripts as well as through membership.

From time to time one hears the distinction drawn between "Swedenborg's Philosophy" and "New Church Philosophy." In accepting material, the present editor as editor is not conscious of this division. Although the Association is devoted to the publication, sale, and study of Swedenborg's earlier works it is also true that the Association has never taken anything but an affirmative view toward the development of philosophy based on the teachings of the Writings. The editor takes pleasure in including in this issue two articles written by New Church ministers: Rev. Eric Sandström and Rev. Ormond Odhner. These articles are probably more influenced by the Writings than by the philosophical works.

This is particularly true of Ormond Odhner's paper, which in fact was rewritten from a sermon. It is based more upon the history of theology than the history of philosophy; and so far as Swedenborg is concerned makes use only of the Writings.

The justification for our including this article in our journal is that any discussion of "confirmation," "reason," "rationality," and "truth" can be philosophical in nature, and we believe that Mr. Odhner's discussion is philosophical.

Erik Sandström's paper depends somewhat upon the philosophical works, and yet the spirit of it is influenced by his background as a student of religion and theology.

The paper was originally published as one of two in *Swedenborg Society 150th Anniversary Lectures* by the Society in London. The Association thanks the Society for permission to reprint this article even while the Society's publication is still in print. The Joint Honorary Secretary, Freda G. Griffith, said in granting permission, "The more people who can read a good lecture the better!"

We wish to call the attention of our readers to the other article in the Swedenborg Society publication. It is by the Rev. Clifford Harley and is entitled "Ultimate Value." The paper emphasizes something that seems difficult for many scholars today to accept, and that is the importance of philosophy. The specifically philosophical topic in this paper is *value*. Mr. Harley says for example:

When we say that a particular kind of action is something that ought to be done or that it ought not to be done, we are making an ethical or a moral judgement. When we say of anything that it is beautiful or that it is ugly, we are making an aesthetic judgment. When we say that something is true or false, reasonable or unreasonable, we are making a rational judgment. When we affirm a belief in God and declare that God is worthy of our reverence and worship, we are making a religious judgment. Now you may have noticed that in each of these different kinds of judgments there is a feature which is common to all of them. It is, that in making any or all of these judgments, we are actually making "value judgments." The real ground of our saying that something ought to be done is our belief that for one of many reasons, it is better or best that we should do this or that.

And later:

... the notion of value in general has relation to everything that we know. It is woven into the very texture of creation, so that if we knew what Ultimate Value was we should know the answer to the most human of all our questions,—has life any intelligible meaning?—and be it noted that human beings are the only kind of beings who can ask these questions.

So much is it the case that value is woven into the very warp and woof of the texture of life and creation, that, being what we are—human beings—we never can escape from the making of value-judgments, and this in relation to almost everything that enters into our experience and in relation to ourselves most of all.