

REVIEW

WORSHIP AND LOVE OF GOD

Emanuel Swedenborg: *Om Guds dyrkan och Karleken till Gud*, translated by Ritva Jonsson, Natur och Kultur, Stockholm, 1961.

Inge Jonsson: *Swedenborgs skapelsedrama De Cultu et Amore Dei*. Natur och Kultur, Stockholm, 1961.

Two important books have recently been published in Sweden. One is a new Swedish translation of Emanuel Swedenborg's *De Cultu et Amore Dei* and the other a doctor's thesis dealing with certain aspects of this last work of Swedenborg's scientific-philosophical period. The translation was made by Mrs. Ritva Jonsson and the thesis written by her husband, Inge Jonsson.

The intention here is not to make a thorough examination of the works by the husband-wife team, but, in anticipation of such a critical review, merely to introduce the works to our readers.

Most of Swedenborg's theological works have been translated into Swedish, although several of the translations are now old and need a revision. In contrast, hardly any of the scientific-philosophical works are available in Swedenborg's mother tongue. It is therefore with great satisfaction we note a complete translation of the crowning work of Swedenborg's preparatory period. The translation is published as a part of a classical series by one of Sweden's larger publishing houses, called *Living Literature*.

Dr. Inge Jonsson's thesis, *Swedenborg's Creation Drama De Cultu et Amore Dei*, is a welcome addition to the rather meager positive literature outside the New Church about Swedenborg's works. Dr. Jonsson is a professor of literature, and it is therefore natural that he has chosen this particular work of Swedenborg's as his subject matter, for in no other work has Swedenborg written with such a poetical inspiration as here. But the work has more than literary value. It is an epitome of Swedenborg's long scientific-philosophical production, a synthesis composed of many elements necessary in the preparation of a mind capable of receiving and communicating the New Revelation.

De Cultu thus contains material for studies from various viewpoints. Dr. Jonsson has selected the exposition of sources and motif as his main topic. Since Swedenborg truly was a poly-

historian, this meant covering an enormous amount of literature, of which a bibliography of ten pages bears witness.

According to Dr. Jonsson, the research into sources shows, among other things, that Swedenborg did not necessarily have Milton's *Paradise Lost* as a model for his composition, which has hitherto been commonly supposed on account of the great similarity of the two works in certain respects. Dr. Jonsson thinks that the similarities rather are due to common sources.

The author stresses the importance of placing Swedenborg in his own intellectual and cultural environment in order to get a just picture of the man and his views. Some of the judgments and conclusions Dr. Jonsson makes from his studies cannot be accepted by New Church men, but there is no doubt that his study as a whole is animated by admiration and a spirit of sympathy.

Dr. Jonsson wishes to call his thesis a *prodromus* to a wider interest in Swedenborg in humanistic research, for "there is no lack of arresting problems for one who travels in Swedenborg's world, on the contrary, one is constantly reminded of their multiplicity, and here is a wide field for future researchers (*respondenter*)." Such research can be of significant value to our understanding of the development of Swedenborg's thoughts as they appear in his production.

L.O.A.

SPACE AND EXTENSE IN THE SPIRITUAL WORLD

Charles Rittenhouse Pendleton, Bryn Athyn, Pennsylvania.
1962. 65 pages. On sale Academy Book Room, 50 cents.

It is hoped that someone may write for the *NEW PHILOSOPHY* a more complete review of this essay. But another issue ought not to pass by without calling attention to the publication of this work and giving a brief description of its contents.

The 65 pages are divided into twenty-six sections and these are arranged under four main headings :

- Part I The Problem
- Part II Swedenborg's Contemporaries
- Part III The Philosophic Works
- Part IV The Writings

The main theme of the work appears to be an understanding of the words "space" and "extent." Thus, to quote a part of the Conclusion :

We are now ready for the answer to the first question. Is there space in the spiritual world? No. There is no space in the spiritual world. But there is extension there.

These two answers are contradictory if we take the modern meaning of these two words, because the dictionary says that they mean the same thing. To Swedenborg however, they had a different meaning. A space is a distance, area or volume determined by the fixed materials of the earth, while an extense is something spread out or stretched out, whether on the earth or not. So with Swedenborg's meanings there is no space in the spiritual world, but there is extense there.

These different meanings of the words space and extension were in use in Swedenborg's day, they were used in the *Philosophic Works*, and so they were used in the Writings. And when these meanings are used today to interpret the Writings, they remove a number of difficulties.

It is the evident intention of the author to clear up the difficulties that have been presented to New Church men in the past concerning space by the distinction thus drawn between the meanings of "space" and "extent." Whether or not Dr. Pendleton is successful in this will have to be left to the individual reader. However, all who are readers of Swedenborg owe an expression of thanks to Dr. Pendleton for collecting so many references together under suitable headings, not only from Swedenborg but from contemporary writers.

It is a reminder to this reviewer, whenever he sees such a work as this, that serious affirmative studies concerning Swedenborg's philosophical ideas are few indeed.

The growth of New Church philosophy depends upon an attitude in which creation is regarded as a connected whole. From this it follows that natural truth and spiritual truth must agree.

Somehow this reviewer gets the idea that "advanced thinkers" or "modern minds," even some who are members of the New Church, do not think philosophical ideas worthy of their serious concern. If the compartmentalization of one's attitude continues to the point that "science is for work days" and "church is for Sunday," it will be difficult to see in what respect New Church thinking will differ from that in other "modern" churches.

But let us return, not to the book under review, but to its author. During his long academic life as teacher, Dean of the College in

the Academy, and as writer, he has always seemed to reflect an inner conviction that creation is a connected whole. What other motive would drive one with a formal training in science to consider problems most people would consider as "impossible" if not "meaningless"? When one considers the nature of the problems which have been Dr. Pendleton's concern, for example those of space and time, of the human organic, of the cosmogonic problems presented in the *Principia* and the *Worship and Love of God*, one realizes that they all have one thing in common. This is: how is the Creator related to His creation? This is the grand problem for those who have a belief in the connected wholeness of things.

One can of course adopt a certain type of philosophical reasoning to affirm the futility of such an interest. The verbalization runs something like this: "God is transcendent. Therefore God can never be approached by man. Furthermore if this transcendence is a true one, God cannot transcend His sphere into man!" Such an attitude not only denies to the finite mind the ability to comprehend, but also to God the ability to penetrate into man by revelation!

In the New Church it is not believed that man can comprehend the nature of God. But nevertheless God can be comprehended as He reveals Himself in ultimates, that is in the written Word and in nature. The ultimates of nature appear to man while he is on this earth, but what their real nature is, that is a philosophical problem. These ultimates have corresponding structures in the spiritual world and these also are correspondential appearances to those on earth.

That which appears as space on this earth—what is it? What is that which appears as space in the spiritual world? Such is the problem that Dr. Pendleton tackles.

E.F.A.

SCIENCE FOR THE NON SCIENTIST

A. R. Patton, Burgess Publishing Company, Minneapolis, 1962.

This little paperback is filled with much knowledge about science and about the opinions of scientists. In many ways it will challenge the dormant opinions of the reader himself.

Scattered among the science that is included are remarks that will cause one to wonder about how many things we take for granted only because we are accustomed to them. Regarding the effect of such familiarity he notes humorously,

A familiar brand of breakfast food is known as *Quaker Oats*. How familiar it would seem to find on the food market shelves labelled *Methodist Oats*, or *Presbyterian Oats!* (p. 5).

But this does not really characterize the tone of the book which is very seriously written in most places.

Familiarity with symbols, concepts, and association patterns in the mind leads to a supposed understanding. Some of our scientific symbols are well named and supposedly understood in other fields—metaphors for example.

"The Lord is my Shepherd" is an example of a metaphor. It is often overlooked that when a scientist calls something by a name, such as for instance 'a sodium atom' this is a metaphor. Applying this label does not mean that he really knows what it is, in a deeper sense. In science, each generation learns a new set of metaphors (p. 7).

There is an appeal not only to literature (Shakespeare, p. 116 and Lewis Carroll, p. 115) but to philosophy (Berkeley, p. 117), and there are some interesting descriptions of the origin of words such as "clock" (p. 31), "alcohol" (p. 71), "manufacture" (p. 100).

The relation of science to other activities enters the book in a number of places. For example: "Both scientists and artists are creative, but they differ in their attempts to communicate" (p. 3).

The artist hopes to cause the recipient to recreate "in his own way." The scientist hopes to express himself so that what he says will mean "the same thing to all persons in all times and places." Again, "Big Science thrives on publicity, and as a result the line between science and journalism has become blurred" (p. 21).

Each of these distinctions is amplified. Because of its considerable interest to some of our readers the following distinction among physical science, history, and biological science is quoted in full.

The physical scientist differs from the historian and the biological scientist in respect to the one-time event. Physical science deals with "what happens," while history deals with "what has happened." In order to be accepted in physical science, an event must be experimentally repeatable and must happen the same way each time. Thus, it is scientific to say, "Ice floats on water," because any piece of ice floats on any body of water any time it is tried. If this had been observed only once, it could be a part of history but not a part of physical science. It is for this reason that physical science simply has nothing to say about a subject such as "The Virgin Birth."

The life-span of science has not been very long, and one might conceive of an event which repeats itself only every 10,000 years. It could have been observed by a scientist only once, if at all. Biological science is different from physical science, in that it deals *entirely* with one-time events. Each specimen of life is entirely unique. Thus biological science is closer to history and theology than to physical science. Sometimes the physical scientist insists that biological science is not a science at all, which would be true by this criterion. But it is not necessarily a sound criterion (pp. 3-4).

There are some healthy thoughts in those two paragraphs.

And finally, toward the end of the book, there is this fine piece of historical analysis:

We are living in a world in which Materialism is rapidly entralling the human race. This belief in Materialism is founded on the science of the nineteenth century. Meanwhile, contemporary science has left such a concept far behind. In the present century, space, time, and matter have largely lost their reality. They have become more like the television picture tube which merely scans reality. They are like the contrails left by the jet plane so high in the sky that it cannot be seen. We do not actually see the plane: all we see is where it has been (p. 115).

There is much science and much more like the above in 118 pages. But this is not all. The author apparently has an interesting concept of the meaning of cause. He says:

The judgment as to which is cause and which is effect lies outside the field of science, although it is not always outside the area of decision of the human being who calls himself a scientist (p. 3).

This sentence not only includes this interesting use of "cause" but also suggests that a scientist can be something more than a scientist as a human being!

The possibility that some thought, to be sure not scientific thought, may reach outside of science comes as a definite surprise in a book on science :

The presuppositions of science go back to the spiritual and social foundations of man. Modern science began in the seventeenth century. It grew out of the beliefs held at that time. Of all *things*, there are some which can be perceived by the senses, or by scientific instruments such as the Geiger-Mueller counter, which are really just extensions of the senses. Such things are known as matter, and they make up what we call the material world or the physical world. It is the belief of the great majority of mankind that there is a spiritual world behind this world of matter, even though it cannot be perceived by the senses. Belief in a spiritual world is the result of human experiences which lie outside the realm of science. Science does not deal with the whole of human experience (p. 7).

Concerning realities that have been necessary in the development of the history of thought he says :

Neither complete Materialism nor complete Idealism could have been expected to lead to the new science which blossomed in seventeenth-century Europe and England. A third world-view was necessary, or rather a combination of these two views. In order to create a science which went beyond the materialistic pragmatism of the crafts, it was necessary to believe in the reality of the spiritual world which would lead to the basic presuppositions listed above (p. 8).

And perhaps the reader is now more prepared to receive the following than if it had been given at first :

Nowadays when many seem to hold the view that a scientist who dares to use the word *God* is out of bounds, it may seem surprising to learn that the presuppositions which led to the new science, beginning in the seventeenth century and continuing to this day, were rooted in a firm belief in one God. In fact, there is ample historic documentation for the statement that modern science was an outgrowth of the Christianity of the time; although we shall not attempt to present such a case here. Although it is now possible to point out that the phenomena of the physical world might conceivably have grown out of Atheism, an examination of the lives and beliefs of the great founders of scientific thought will show that such an idea simply did not occur to them (p. 8).

More than the usual space has been given to the review of this small book. But I think the reader will be more than repaid in scientific knowledge gained as well as attitude received if he should spend \$2.50 for this wonderful paperback. My main criticism is of the title. It ought to be *Science for the Scientist and Others*.

E.F.A.