

THE NEW PHILOSOPHY

VOL. LIX

JANUARY, 1956

No. 1

AN INTRODUCTORY COURSE IN PHILOSOPHY

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INTRODUCTION

This article will describe, in two installments, the introductory course in philosophy offered each year in the College of the Academy of the New Church.

The present installment summarizes the work of the first semester, which considers the nature of philosophy and of ultimate reality, and then introduces Swedenborg's philosophy by way of such subjects as reason, truth, and knowledge; soul, mind and body; correspondence and related doctrines.

A later installment will summarize the work of the second semester, the scope of which includes the infinite; Swedenborgian and modern cosmology; life and evolution; free will and determinism; and values. At the end of the article will appear an index of topics and pertinent reading references.

The course is designed not only for the usual reasons as an important part of the Liberal Arts curriculum, but also, in particular, to help young New Church men and women to rationalize their faith in reasonable, modern terms; to dispel, if possible, any false appearance in their minds of inconsistencies among faith, philosophy and science.

Philosophical arguments are important means of protecting the faith of the New Church against misleading or intellectually dishonest attacks, particularly those based on naturalistic or materialistic assumptions. Frequent emphasis is given during the course to the importance of evaluating an argument in the light of its underlying assumptions. And stress is laid on the unique Swe-

denborgian concept that the function of reason is not to discover truth, but to confirm truth.

The course is divided into topics usually requiring one week, although some extend for longer periods. Typically, each topic is considered first in a formal lecture, and then in a reading assignment followed by a quiz and informal group discussion. This technique, aided partly by the fact that the course is taught jointly by a theologian and a scientist, has resulted usually in stimulating lively arguments in and out of class.

OUTLINE OF SECTION A: INTRODUCTION ; ULTIMATE REALITY

1. The Nature of Philosophy
2. The Search for Ultimate Reality
3. Materialism
4. Spiritual Substance
5. Dualism and the Skeptical Crisis

1. *The Nature of Philosophy.* The field of philosophy embraces all of human experience. Its final purpose is to harmonize or rationalize that experience as a whole.

The problems of philosophy are related to four principal topics: 1) ultimate reality; 2) how we know what we know; 3) the laws of precise thinking and 4) values. These four categories are usually called, respectively: metaphysics, epistemology, logic, and axiology.

Philosophy is to be distinguished from faith, on the one hand, and from science on the other, although philosophy has certain elements in common with each. These differences and similarities may be clarified by comparing important characteristics of each discipline.

Faith is of primary importance in the search for truth. "Without the utmost devotion to the Supreme Being," Swedenborg says, "no one can be a complete and truly learned philosopher" (*Principia*, Clissold Ed., 1845, p. 35); and also; "The truth of nature and the truth of revelation, however separate, are never at variance" (EAK II, no. 217). The faith of the New Church is a *rational* faith; that is, it can and should be supported by rational argument and confirmed by science. Thus, as Swedenborg says, "it is now permitted to enter intellectually into the mysteries of faith."

Faith, appealing to divine revelation, holds certain truths to be self-evident (e.g., there is a God, and a divine purpose in creation; the purpose and meaning of life is found in the will of God).

Philosophy addresses itself to reason, admitting the validity of faith only in so far as it can be confirmed by reason. Philosophy is reflective, and therefore primarily concerned not with things but with meanings and values. It is to be distinguished from sense-experience, but should also be distinguished from day-dreaming and aimless reflection. Philosophy is thus ordered reflection and reasoning; a discipline, precise and analytical.

Natural science also is reflective, disciplined thinking. But whereas science is typically concerned with some limited field of reality, with a single fact or group of facts which it seeks out and classifies, philosophy is concerned with reality as a whole, with relations between the facts or groups of facts discovered by science. Again, science deals with structure and function, and philosophy with meanings and values. Science, finally, is limited to the evidence of the senses and the "scientific method," whereas philosophy may employ the evidence of reason beyond sense-evidence.

Reading reference: Barrett, *Philosophy*, Macmillan, 1935, pp. 31-40, concerning "Differences between Philosophical and Scientific Explanation."

2. *The Search for Ultimate Reality.* Philosophy seeks a final explanation of the all of reality, considering how each limited portion of reality fits into the scheme as a whole, and investigating the ultimate, underlying nature of reality.

Ultimate reality is that which is utterly irreducible, not a mere manifestation of some deeper reality; or, that into which all else can be resolved, and which cannot itself be resolved into anything else; or, that in terms of which all else can be expressed, and which cannot itself be expressed in terms of anything outside of itself. For example, a table can be described in terms of proximate realities: molecules, atoms, electrons, energy; each of which, in turn, is reducible to reality of another order. Ultimate reality, not reducible, is the foundation on which all proximate realities rest—the essential stuff of the universe, out of which everything else is derived.

The search for ultimate reality, which has persisted among philosophers since ancient times, has led to three basic positions:

viz., materialism or naturalism, which assumes that ultimate reality consists only of matter; spiritualism or idealism, which assumes ultimate reality to consist only of mind or spirit; and dualism, which assumes the reality of both matter and spirit.

Perhaps the most important question in the fundamental disagreement between spiritualist and naturalist centers upon the question of the reality or existence of matter or substance. In an era of civilization the superficial features of which have been incredibly transformed through scientific technology, common sense rebels at the idea of seriously questioning the reality of substance; for the "scientific method" rests upon sense-evidence, and this, in turn, upon the *assumption* that sensible properties arise from objects whose underlying substance is real. And yet, reflection brings the realization that what is perceived or sensed is not substance itself, but properties or qualities. Thus, science, since based upon assumptions, does not yield absolute certainty, as some naively believe.

Reading reference: Barrett, *ibid.*, pp. 41-51, concerning "The Need of Substance."

3. *Materialism.* All the facts of the universe, says the materialist, can be explained ultimately in terms of matter and motion.

Logical consequences of this theory include the following: there is no God, nor any purpose in creation; life is merely matter; there is no "soul" within the body; and "mind" is merely that which the brain does; man is, therefore, a merely physical mechanism, a chance product of unintelligent arrangements of atoms, having no free will nor choice, his every act being predetermined by physical causes; except in a relative sense, there is no goodness nor evil, no ethical or moral standard; purpose is a product of evolution, but evolution is not the product of a purpose; every aspect of life has a material cause, and there is no cause of life itself beyond matter.

"Old-fashioned" materialism has been forced, by serious logical difficulties, to adopt a modified position better called "naturalism." This has come about with the realization that the ultimate nature of matter itself appears to be unknowable to science. A typical modern position is so-called "naturalistic" or "scientific" humanism, which seeks improvement of social and personal life solely through science-guided intelligence. The naturalistic humanist, like his materialist predecessor, assumes no God, no Creator, no

first cause, no immortality, no preconceived purpose in nature, no revelation of spiritual truth, no supernatural reality.

Reading reference : Barrett, *ibid.*, pp. 60–77, concerning materialism.

4. *Spiritualism or Idealism.* It is not possible, argues the idealist, to have absolute certainty of anything outside of experience. Since all experience comes as ideas, objects or matter are not real to us, but only our ideas of them. In order to account for ideas, the idealist assumes mind or spirit to be reality—the only reality, since matter is unknowable in itself.

Modern philosophy began with Descartes (1596–1650) who, seeking absolute certainty, rejected sense-evidence because it is sometimes deceptive. The only truth Descartes could accept as absolutely certain was that he himself existed because he was able to think and doubt: "*Cogito, ergo sum.*" From this he argued that God must exist, not only as the cause of his idea of God, but also as the cause of Descartes himself. Further, he reasoned that material things really exist, since God, being perfect, would not deceive men through the senses.

Descartes, a dualist, believed in ultimate reality of two kinds: mind and matter. He saw, however, that the material universe, though real, is not exactly what it seems to be; that many properties or qualities of external objects are mere sensations in the mind.

Locke (1632–1704) visualized such properties or qualities as being of two kinds: primary qualities, or those inherent in things themselves whether known or not; and secondary qualities which are not actually properties of things, but depend upon the observer's reaction. Locke said that primary qualities do, and secondary qualities do not, accurately represent material reality.

Berkeley (1685–1753), seeking to refute the growing atheism of his day, introduced idealism, whose thesis is that the only reality is mind or spirit; that matter has no genuine reality, being merely an idea in the mind; and that even if there were material objects, nothing could be known about them except ideas. Put differently, an idea can be like nothing except an idea. Disagreeing with Locke, Berkeley denied the possibility of distinguishing between primary and secondary qualities, insisting that both exist only as ideas in the mind of an observer. To account for the apparent

permanence of objects in nature independently of men's minds, Berkeley considered them to be ideas in the mind of God, if not of men. The logical conclusion of idealism, then, is that all is God; nature, including man, being the continuous expression of the Divine mind.

Difficulties with idealism appear in its failure either to provide a satisfactory doctrine of nature or to account for the discreteness of individual beings. Even more serious is the fact, as Hume pointed out, that Berkeley's own argument against materialism can be turned against idealism: for, just as one can know nothing of the universe except as an idea, so he can know nothing of the mind except as an idea; he is left, then, with only his own ideas, and with no certain knowledge of either mind or matter.

Reading reference: Barrett, *ibid.*, Chap. VII, pp. 113-121, concerning spiritual substance, the banishment of matter, and Berkeley's idealism.

5. *Dualism and the Skeptical Crisis.* Dualism assumes that ultimate reality consists of two different kinds of substances, mind and matter, neither of which can be reduced to the other. Most of us, most of the time, adopt the dualist position, or at least behave as if we do. We are, at such times, "naive realists": that is, we accept without question the appearance that both matter and spirit are real. Critical reflection, however, as to whether this is a real appearance or a fallacious appearance leads to the realization that the validity of any philosophy rests upon the validity of its primary assumptions, and that there is no absolute certainty in philosophy or in science, both of which are based upon assumptions.

Following Berkeley's "banishment of matter," Hume (1711-1766) precipitated a philosophical crisis by turning Berkeley's own argument against idealism, showing that all we can know of mind is our ideas of it, and thus "banishing" mind as well as matter.

Philosophy was saved from this skeptical crisis by Kant (1724-1804) who argued that there is not only knowledge from the senses, but also knowledge apart from sense-experience: knowledge which derives from the inherent nature and structure of the mind itself. Kant insisted that the mind is not passive, but an active, intelligent organ which selects from among the chaos of external sensations and molds them into comprehensible, whole ideas; thus, that there is in the mind *a priori* knowledge superior to mere sensation.

This was opposed by empiricists, such as Locke, who had assumed that the mind at birth is passive and blank, and that all knowledge and experience comes from without, through the senses.

Thus, Kant restored to philosophy a balance which had been threatened by Berkeley's exposure of the weakness of materialism and by Hume's exposure of the weakness of idealism. Kant agreed with Locke and Hume that the essential substance of either mind or matter is unknowable; but he did not on that account question their existence.

Although Kant thus rescued philosophy (and with it dualism, vital to religious faith) from a serious dilemma, he failed to answer the essential problem of dualism, i.e., how the mind communicates with matter, and vice versa; or in Berkeley's words, how something which is utterly unlike an idea becomes an idea.

Reading reference: Barrett, *ibid.*, Chap. V, pp. 88-98, concerning the dualistic dilemma; the dualistic theories of Descartes and of Locke.

OUTLINE OF SECTION B: REASON; TRUTH; MIND AND BODY

1. The Limitations of Reason
2. Sources of Truth
3. The Pure Intellect
4. Perception
5. Sensation
6. Mind and Brain
7. Swedenborg's Search for the Soul
8. Correspondence and Related Doctrines

1. *The Limitations of Reason.* The brief survey of modern philosophy considered in the first section of this course is intended to give an idea of the philosophical environment of Swedenborg's time, in order that his unique contribution to philosophy can be better understood; and, perhaps more important, in order to show clearly the limitations of reason alone.

Some thinkers, like Tolstoi, keenly aware of these limitations, have concluded that philosophy is unreliable, misleading, futile: a barren field of reflection which only leads men astray in the search for truth. Abandoning reason, they have turned to blind faith. Swedenborg, on the contrary, holding to philosophy and reason, says that man has an understanding to see what is true, and from truth to see what is good. This understanding is not acquired by

philosophy as it exists in our (and his) day, but by philosophy as it exists in itself—by *true* philosophy, which is in concord with the Divine Word. “Philosophy . . . must be such that from it men may perceive what is spiritual and heavenly” (*Word Explained* 914–15). Swedenborg maintained that all reasoning from the appearances of self-life is unsound, leading only to falsity. *Sound* reason, he says, is reasoning from the self-evident truths of revelation: there is one God, a divine purpose in creation, a heaven from the human race; God has revealed His will to man. The beginning of wisdom is the acknowledgment of God; and the function of reason is not to determine truth, but to confirm truth.

With Kant, Swedenborg believed the existence of both mind and matter to be self-evident. With Kant also, Swedenborg assumed that there is a wisdom inherent in man before birth. But whereas Kant believed that there is *a priori* knowledge inherent in the mind, Swedenborg held with Locke and Hume that the *mind* at birth is blank, in fact, does not exist. Swedenborg postulated a wisdom inherent in the *soul*, superior to the mind, and distinct from the knowledges which come from without by way of experience.

According to Swedenborg, a true perception of ultimate reality can be had only through the joint testimony of experience, reason and faith. For faith without reason is blind faith; and reason without faith is not sound; both are dependent upon experience, without which the mind would not even exist.

Reading reference: Swedenborg, *Word Explained*, nos. 914–15; *Arcana Coelestia*, no. 1495; *True Christian Religion* no. 8: 1, 2; no. 9: 1.

2. *Sources of Truth.* In the search for truth, philosophers differ as to what are reliable sources of knowledge and as to how we know what we know. This is the problem of epistemology, respecting which three basic positions appear possible. These are usually called empiricism, rationalism and intuitionism.

Empiricism is the theory that all knowledge originates in sense-experience.

Rationalism postulates that truth is, by its nature, rational; that sense-experience can have no meaning until ordered by *a priori* knowledge inherent in the rational mind.

Intuitionism holds that truth is self-evidencing or self-revelatory, seen by insight or perception from within the mind.

Swedenborg, advocating something of each of these positions, early in his career (*Principia*, 1734) identified "the means leading to true philosophy" as three: experience, geometry and reason. Later (*The Animal Kingdom*, 1744), he identified these means as experience, the sciences and the faculty of thinking distinctly. *Experience*, to Swedenborg, meant simply empirical sense-experience; by *geometry*, however, he meant considerably more than the mathematical science of geometry, implying also the organization of sense-experiences into ordered knowledges, or *sciences*; and by his term *reason*, or the *faculty of thinking distinctly*, Swedenborg meant not merely natural reasoning but an intuitive perception of universal truth and underlying causes.

Swedenborg's theological Writings emphasize the doctrine that knowledges are not truths but are the forms in which truths may be seen if those knowledges are rightly ordered by primary assumptions which in themselves are true. This doctrine, upon which New Church education fundamentally rests, implies that all the wisdom to which the human mind can attain is inherent in the soul from conception; and that all instruction (i.e., acquisition and ordering of knowledges on which the mind is built) is thus a means by which the way is opened for influx of truth from the soul. The revelation given through Swedenborg consists of knowledges so ordered in his mind by the Lord that within them men might see Divine truth in human form. This revelation is *rational* in the sense that its arguments and conclusions can be logically analyzed and rationally confirmed. They are thus found to accord with intuition, with reason and with science.

This New Church position, of course, is flatly rejected by empiricists. Modern positivists for example, claim that ideas as to reliable sources of knowledge typically evolve through three stages beginning with a "childish" theological stage in which it is believed that final causes are to be found in revelations from God; progressing to a youthful meta-physical stage which seeks abstract absolutes through speculations upon nature; reaching at last the mature stage of positivism in which all absolutes are rejected as meaningless, and the search for truth centers exclusively upon sense-evidence.

Positivism, however, being limited by its narrow assumptions, has not furnished satisfactory answers to the deeper needs of the

human spirit. Many have, therefore, sought truth through faith or intuition, particularly in relation to moral and political questions. But intuition alone often conflicts with science; nor do men agree as to what is good or bad, nor as to other perceptive truths.

In the Most Ancient Church, men received truth perceptively, by internal dictate from God. In the Ancient Church, after the Flood, the will of man, and hence his perception, were corrupted. The Lord then separated man's will and understanding, in order that he might see truth apart from the corrupted will. Since the Flood, man's only way back to good is first to see good in the form of truth; then to love the truth; and then from truth to come to love the good.

The Writings teach that there is something of perception left in every man today: an internal dictate that there is a God; all that is left of the celestial perception of the Most Ancients. Without this man could not be brought to acknowledge God at all. No one is born with an *idea* of God, but must receive this by instruction, after which perception enables him to see the truth within the idea.

Reading references: Swedenborg: *Animal Kingdom*, 459–62; *Principia*, Clissold Ed., pp. 34–37, concerning the means leading to true philosophy.

3. *Pure Intellect.* Fundamental to Swedenborg's philosophy is the acknowledgment that God is revealed to man in His Word. Faith in the Word presupposes a source of knowledge which is neither experience nor reason. Such "truth beyond reason" is called *intuitive truth*, which man sees by an *internal dictate or perception*.

Swedenborg's theological works, referring to this truth, teach that "there is a universal influx from God into the souls of men of the truth that there is a God, and that He is one" (*True Christian Religion*, no. 8); also that the highest degree of the mind is opened by perception of truths, and that all perception is of love (*True Christian Religion*, no. 42; *Divine Providence*, no. 36; *Spiritual Diary*, no. 1644) or is love seeing.

But Swedenborg's philosophic doctrine of intuition is found in the *Rational Psychology*, where intuition or perception is identified with the "Pure Intellect," a term not used in his theological Writings.

The pure intellect cannot be instructed by the senses, but already

possesses a knowledge of the whole of nature, and a universal perception of nature's laws. From this pure intellect comes "the faculty of thinking distinctly" referred to later in the *Animal Kingdom*.

The following outline indicates the place and functions of the pure intellect in Swedenborg's scheme of the human mind as developed in his *Rational Psychology*:

Soul (spiritual intelligence—origin of *true* perception)

Pure Intellect (perception of universal truths on plane of nature)

Mixed or Human Intellect (reasoning, judgment)

Internal Senses (imagination, memory)

External Senses (sensation from external world)

Reading reference: Swedenborg, *Rational Psychology*, nos. 123-39; concerning the Pure Intellect.

4. *The Soul. Perception.* In the theological Writings, Swedenborg describes the human soul as a first, primitive vessel which receives life immediately from the Lord according to its form; i.e., according to the particular form of love and wisdom, or use, for which that man is created. Hence, the masculine soul, a form of truth from good, or of wisdom from love, differs fundamentally from the feminine soul, a form of love from wisdom.

The soul functions first as a formative force, weaving for itself a body in the womb, and, after birth, a mind. It is also a selective agent, taking to itself those experiences and knowledges by means of which it can most fully express the delight of its love. The soul, finally, is a perceptive faculty, the origin of all conscious sensation.

Perception is not possible apart from knowledges, which are forms in which the light of the soul is received and reflected. Knowledges come only by instruction and experience. Hence there must be a written revelation in the form of ordered knowledges or doctrines, within which the soul's perception may see spiritual truths.

The soul endows its mind with an affection for truth, by which it delights in acquiring knowledges. The soul then perceives truth in these knowledges, particularly in the divinely ordered knowledges of the Word. Thus, all perception is from affection, i.e., from love; perception is really love seeing, or the sight of the mind.

Reading references dealing with perception: Swedenborg: *Arzana Coelestia*, nos. 1495, 1496, 1900–1904; *Intercourse of the Soul and Body*, VI: 1(8); *Word Explained*, no. 643. Note particularly in AC 1900–4 the story of Abraham, Sarai and Hagar, which by correspondences describes how the first or natural rational (Ishmael) is born from the affection of natural truths (Hagar), serving thus as a necessary means for building up the mind in order that, later, the spiritual or second rational (Isaac) may be born from the affection of spiritual truths (Sarai).

5. *Swedenborg's Theory of Sensation.* All conscious sensation is from the soul, which alone perceives and sensates. At birth, man has a soul and body, but no mind. By means of physical stimuli via the senses from the external world, the soul forms its mind. These stimuli or impulses are perceived by the soul as sensation, which involves three factors: 1) that which is sensed, i.e., an object; 2) that which senses, i.e., the soul; and 3) the phenomenon of sensation itself, which belongs to the mind, or the plane of conscious existence. In the interplay between soul and body, sensation arises.

The quality or nature of perception or sensation depends upon the nature or form of the sense impression, since all influx is according to form. If harmonious with the soul's love, sensation is perceived by the soul as delightful; if not harmonious, as unpleasant.

In his *Rational Psychology*, Swedenborg develops the thesis that it is not the body which is conscious, but the mind, the plane of sensation where the soul perceives the nature, form and quality of sensory impulses from without. This is the miracle of consciousness, never explained by philosophy or science. Because of this dilemma, philosophers have been forced to abandon dualism in favor of materialism or idealism. Swedenborg's theory of sensation, in explaining the dilemma of dualism, protects the Christian faith, which logically rests upon dualism.

Reading references: Swedenborg, *Rational Psychology* preface; pp. 1–14, concerning sensation.

De Charms, *Growth of the Mind*, Chaps. 2 and 3, concerning the soul and mind, understanding and affection.

6. *Mind and Brain.* The awkward intellectual dilemma of the modern materialist or naturalist is nowhere more dramatically seen

than in his efforts to explain the mind-body problem in the light of modern research. From every standpoint this has been attempted, sometimes brilliantly, sometimes pathetically, but never successfully. Starting with the assumption that mind and brain are of the same stuff, the analysis of all available scientific data always produces the same result: there is no scientific explanation of thought or affection. The miracle of consciousness remains a total mystery in the middle of a vast accumulation of electrical, chemical, and physical measurements made on the living and dead brains and nerves of humans and animals.

By comparison, Swedenborg's explanation of consciousness in terms of the knowledge of the 18th century is most impressive, particularly from the philosophical standpoint; but remarkably enough, also from the scientific viewpoint. For Swedenborg, drawing upon all the pertinent scientific data of his time, produced a number of scholarly treatises on the brain and nerves, and on related physiological topics, which contain a number of remarkable anticipations of modern discoveries concerning functions of the cortex, medulla, pituitary gland, etc. As one medical review noted, commenting on the belated (1938-40) publication of Swedenborg's *Cerebrum*, "more than two hundred years ago Swedenborg emphasized . . . concepts which only in relatively recent years have come to the fore . . ." (*Journal of the American Medical Association* 117: 1053, 1941).

Remarkably enough, Swedenborg's genius as a scientific philosopher has not been recognized by the learned world. Possibly this is partly because many of his treatises lay for generations unpublished or not translated from Latin. But more probably the reason is that most philosophers and scientists of our age do not consider Swedenborg's basic philosophical assumptions intellectually respectable, viz., that there is a God, a purpose in creation and a spiritual world in which the mind lives, discretely within and above the body and brain.

Reading reference: Ramstrom, "Swedenborg on the Cerebral Cortex as the Seat of Psychological Activities," *Proceedings of the International Swedenborg Congress* (London, 1910), pp. 56-70.

7. *Swedenborg's Search for the Soul*. The primary purpose of Swedenborg's anatomical and physiological studies was a search for the soul. His first effort in this search was the little work,

On Tremulation, written in 1719, in which Swedenborg maintains that the soul communicates with the physical universe by means of tremulations or motions. For the next 15 years, Swedenborg appears not to have directly pursued his studies on the soul, being occupied with engineering work and with studies in the physical sciences which culminated in the publication in 1733 of mineralogical works on iron and copper and his great cosmological work, *The Principia*. In 1734, Swedenborg published *The Mechanism of the Intercourse Between the Soul and the Body*, in which he developed, as part of a primitive theory of sensation, the concept of mutation (change of state) induced by vibrations or motions transmitted between contiguous (touching) parts. In the decade following 1734, Swedenborg undertook an earnest search for the soul, systematically mastering the best knowledge of his day in physiology, psychology, and philosophy. During this period, he produced an astonishing number of major works including the *Infinite*, the *Cerebrum*, the *Economy of the Animal Kingdom*, the *Fibre*, the *Rational Psychology*, *Generation*, *Psychological Transactions*, the *Brain*, the *Senses* and the *Animal Kingdom*. These works, along with a number of lesser related tracts, represent Swedenborg's repeated efforts to discover the nature of the soul from various starting-points.

As he came at last to realize, however, the soul cannot be known except through revelation, nor its intercourse with the body. His search, however, far from being fruitless, developed a body of philosophical doctrines in Swedenborg's mind which were necessary not only to his later role as revelator, but as a basis for all men's rational understanding of the Revelation, as is evidenced by the frequent appearance in the theological works of these same philosophical doctrines, often in similar language. Even in his earlier works, e.g., the *Cerebrum* (1738) and the *Economy of the Animal Kingdom* (1739-40), Swedenborg outlined the key philosophical doctrines which were progressively elaborated and refined in later studies: his doctrines of forms, of series and degrees, of modifications (or influx) and of correspondences. Applying these doctrines, he saw that the body consists of degrees of fluids or bloods, responsive to corresponding atmospheres, and acting in turn upon corresponding degrees in the brain and body. Such concepts led to the development, for example, of his marvelous theory of sen-

sation (*Rational Psychology*, 1742) discussed earlier in this course, and eventually, through the doctrine of correspondences, to a unified view of the entire organic and physical universe, arranged and organized in an harmonious and orderly pattern according to uses.

Reading reference: Henderson, "The Purpose of the Philosophical Works," *NEW PHILOSOPHY*, 52: 345-55, 1949.

8. *Correspondences.* Swedenborg's entire philosophical system rests upon the premise that mind and matter are utterly distinct substances. In searching for the key that would account for the mode whereby the one communicates with the other, Swedenborg gave careful consideration to the explanations of his day: Aristotle's doctrine of Physical Influx, Descartes' doctrine of Occasional Influx, and Leibnitz's theory of Pre-established Harmony. Finding the answer in none of these, Swedenborg turned to the study of anatomy, hoping to discover not only the nature of the soul itself, but also that mode of communication whereby the soul has intercourse with the material body in which it dwells.

It was while engaged in this work that Swedenborg developed over a period of years his doctrine of correspondences. It was here on the plane of nature that he observed that no impulse can be carried to the brain as a sensation except by way of a corresponding organ. Thus, it is not the eye which sees nor the ear which hears; it is the soul, for this alone is capable of sensation. However, what is actually perceived is a change of state in the eye or the ear which is communicated to the internal sensories or cortical glands of the brain as a corresponding change in their own state.

The doctrine of correspondences actually is the law of communication—that law by which the soul communicates with the body, and, in general, by which all communication is effected. Were it not for correspondences man could not communicate with man, nor man with God, nor God with man. Briefly stated, the law is that all communication is effected by means of correspondences. For even as the forces of nature are communicated to the eye, so the eye communicates with the sensory fibre; and as the fibre communicates with the cortical gland, so the gland communicates with the imagination; and as the imagination communicates with the intellect, so does the intellect commune with God—all by means of correspondences.

The thesis that all communication is effected by means of corre-

spondences may also be illustrated by the words which we speak, for they too are correspondences; sounds which, through experience and usage, we have come to associate with ideas and affections. And even as one man cannot communicate with another except by means of correspondences, neither can there be communication between God and man except by the same mode. This is why we are taught in the Writings that "by means of correspondences communication with heaven is granted to man," and "that there might be such a conjunction of heaven with man the Word was written by pure correspondences" (*Heaven and Hell*, no. 114. See also *Arcana Coelestia*, nos. 4280, 8615).

The doctrine of correspondences as formulated by Swedenborg in the philosophical works is not to be confused with the Divine doctrine. It is one thing to be led by the Lord to perceive, as of one's self, those truths which are everywhere reflected in nature, and it is quite another to be commissioned by the Lord to reveal those Divine truths which lie beyond the limits of natural philosophy. Whereas the one is a human formulation of a natural law, the other is a revelation of the Lord's Divine Human. The relation between the two is one of correspondence. This not only applies to the doctrine of correspondences, but to all those other principles or philosophic doctrines which Swedenborg developed in the philosophic works. The doctrine of order and degrees, the doctrine of forms, the doctrine of modifications, the doctrine of series and society, the doctrine of influx—each and all *co-respond* to the Divine doctrine, for, as already quoted, "Correspondences are natural truths wherein, as in mirrors, spiritual truths are represented" (*Arcana Coelestia*, no. 9300), that is to say, are *re-presented*.

Reading reference: Pendleton, "The Doctrine of Correspondences," *NEW CHURCH LIFE*, Dec., 1951, pp. 532-44.

(*To be concluded*)

NOTICE

The Letters and Memorials of Emanuel Swedenborg, 1748-1772, volume two, translated and edited by Alfred Acton, is now available. This volume contains all the extant letters and memorials written by Swedenborg from 1749 to the end of his life, the Index to both volumes and appendices. The Swedenborg Scientific Association, Bryn Athyn, Pa. Cloth \$4.00.