

And it is from this rational approach that has been distilled this seemingly fantastic conception of the universe, in which are occurring these cosmic events on a scale almost beyond belief, were they not so inescapably established, involving the raw materials of the firmament in their most fundamental forms. Here the secrets of nature are being disclosed—as Jeans truly said many years ago, “The story of the atom is written across the sky”—and surely it is the least we can do to take advantage of these gifts of nature in the hope of coming to understand more fully the world in which we live.

It is true that God, the Creator of the universe, has given to man the power and concomitant delight of discovering laws in the ultimates of the material world, and that in the process of discovery an open mind, a rational approach, and an unbiased gathering of evidence are to be recommended. However the “inner voice” that speaks from a firm belief that God created the universe, not from nothing but by finiting his own Divine Substance, a belief that the purpose of the whole of creation both natural and spiritual is that there shall be a heaven from the human race, and thus that every object and law looks toward this end—this inner voice will not lead to disaster but to a true understanding of those external facts that man is able to discover through scientific methods. It will lead him to see that hydrogen atoms are not the “most fundamental forms,” and that there *is* meaning to it all. Through Revelation we can come to see the real reasons for “coming to understand more fully the world in which we live.”

MORNA HYATT

NOTES FROM READERS

In the “Philosophical Notes” on Pragmatism (October, 1960, pp. 221–224), it says:

“There is a certain element of truth in pragmatism. In this world what is practical is related to man’s action *in this world*, and according to Swedenborg that action is use.”

As the author of an earlier article on Pragmatism (“American Pragmatists and Pragmatism,” October, 1956, pp. 117–123), I was interested in this statement.

For the New Church man this statement has philosophical implications: how can words in *common* usage be translatable or

transferrable into distinctive *Swedenborgian* usage, and vice versa? In other words, can we, with reasonable accuracy, say: "practical—useful—use," or, "practical—useful—of use"?

As linguists point out, it is sometimes difficult to translate words from one language to another, from Greek to English, or German to English. Similarly, it is sometimes difficult to translate philosophical terms (e.g., "pragmatic") into theological terms (use). The reason is, of course, that Swedenborgian theological terminology often transcends philosophical terminology by its deeper meaning, its recognition of planes of the mind beyond the natural, its acknowledgment of the true meaning of "infinite" and "eternal." That "use" involves concepts beyond what is practical is a distinctive contribution by Swedenborg—his acknowledgment that the companion words to "use" are "love" and "wisdom."

If, then, "use" could be defined as "a love taking form," the Swedenborgian philosopher finds himself immediately divorced from the rationale of the pragmatist. The pragmatic attitude is an attitude which looks away from first things, principles, "categories," supposed necessities; it looks toward last things, fruits, consequences, facts; it sees, ultimately, effects without causes.

If we are to maintain distinctiveness we need not quibble with Mr. Allen's statement that there is a certain element of truth in pragmatism. Rather, he has made a contribution in his following statement, "In this world what is practical is related to man's action *in this world*. . . ."

LAWSON A. PENDLETON

Editor, THE NEW PHILOSOPHY:

I have just read a most interesting book, *Toward a Unified Cosmology*, by Reginald O. Kapp (Basic Books Inc., New York: 1960). Most of us who are at all interested in cosmology have heard of the theory of continuous creation as propounded by Hoyle, Bondi, Gold and others. Mr. Kapp has taken the theory a step further, and proposes not only continuous origin (his word, chosen to dissociate his theory from any theological import), but also a finite "half-life" of matter, in short, continuous extinction of matter. His name for the theory is "Symmetrical Impermanence." In his view, matter originates at a constant rate per unit volume of the universe, and becomes extinct at a constant rate per unit mass.

Beginning with this hypothesis, he investigates the implications of it and the conclusions that can be inferred from it. And he makes, on a first reading at any rate, a very good case for it. He shows how we could expect galaxies to form and evolve, how empty space between galaxies would expand until a new galaxy would sprout and grow there. He also shows how we could expect suns and solar systems to evolve, thus supporting the New Church view that a sun without earths around it would be useless. Such support of course must be derived; it is not at all explicit.

Along the way he develops a new hypothesis about gravity. This, he says, consists of a region of contracting space that occurs with every extinction of a particle of matter. Gravity is not a property of matter, but rather of the extinction of matter, or the extinction of space, which are the same thing.

Mr. Kapp's language is very careful and precise. And the language seems to match the thought. Precision both in writing and in thought make the book a pleasure to read. At times, however, one has the wish that he would get on with the matter rather than preparing the ground so carefully for each new step. But this is about as small a defect as one may be permitted to mention, and I think Mr. Kapp may be forgiven.

A feature that should appeal to specialists in particular fields of science is the set of appendices, which outline possible approaches to testing the hypothesis in the fields of astronomy, nuclear physics, biology, geology, and so on.

These are only the sketchiest of highlights of the book. Throughout ideas occur that are novel and challenging. Altogether, the book makes fascinating reading, and should appeal to the New Church man, since it allows for a continually creating God, for an orderly development of the universe differentiated into galaxies, solar systems, and therefore human beings. Even the few thoughts which Mr. Kapp calls undeveloped, concerning the nature of the particle, seem to approach Swedenborg's *Principia* description of the finites. I do not feel qualified to compare the two descriptions without a restudy of Swedenborg's work. But, if nothing else, *Toward a Unified Cosmology* has at least inspired the desire to make that restudy.

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