

REVIEW

ARCANA COELESTIA. By Emanuel Swedenborg. Third Latin Edition, Volume V (nos. 5191-6626). Edited by Rev. P. H. Johnson, B. A., B. Sc., and, after his death, by Rev. E. C. Mongredien. Swedenborg Society (Inc.), London, 1961. Cloth, pp. 719.

It is a great pleasure to see in print this fifth volume of an eight-volume project undertaken by the Swedenborg Society. In appearance and workmanship the project is a fine example of the high standards of care and scholarship which the New Church has come to associate with the Swedenborg Society, and which will make it of lasting value to the scholars and translators of the Church.

The editors have carried forward the work of correcting and improving the Latin text, begun by Dr. J. F. I. Tafel in his second Latin Edition, and made necessary by the fact that the First Edition printed in London in 1749 contains many evident errors. The careful work done by both Dr. Tafel and the editors of the present Third Edition indicate that in Providence the errors in the First Edition are all of a minor nature, being for the most part the kind of *errata* which by today's standards of publication would have been corrected by the proof-reader. Obviously these evident *errata* needed to be corrected in subsequent editions; but more important, their very presence made it necessary to examine carefully the whole text of the First Edition in an effort to discover the possible presence of other errors of a less evident and perhaps more substantial nature.

Since the final draft or printer's copy of the manuscript prepared by Swedenborg is so far as is known not extant, having probably been destroyed by the printer when he was finished with it, Dr. Tafel had to rely on judgment based on his extensive knowledge of the doctrines and of Latin in his effort to verify the text for his edition, the first volume of which appeared in 1833. The editors of the present Third Edition have been greatly helped in their work by Dr. Tafel's careful and sound scholarship. But, in addition, they have had the invaluable aid of having available to them the original manuscript of the *Arcana Coelestia*, which was Swedenborg's first or working draft, and which will be referred to as the autograph. Though it is evident that the final draft

which Swedenborg prepared and sent to the printer contained a number of changes and additions which do not appear in the autograph, it nevertheless provides to a very extensive degree a reliable guide as to what was meant and what Swedenborg probably wrote in his final draft. And this especially insofar as the autograph is compared with the texts of the first and second editions, which is what the editors of the Third Edition have done with considerable care and diligence.

In an admittedly somewhat cursory examination of the volume under review, it seemed to this reviewer that all the errors both actual and possible found in the first edition, and certainly all those corrected by the editors, are of a minor nature, having no substantial effect on the meaning or doctrinal content of the text. Many of the corrections concerned references both to the text. Many of the corrections concerned references both to the *Arcana Coelestia* itself and to Scripture. (In connection with the latter the editors have used the numbering in the Authorized Version.) Where corrections have had to be made in the Scriptural quotations contained in the text, the editors have consulted where necessary not only Swedenborg's copy of Schmidius, but also the Vulgate as well as the Hebrew and Greek texts. Other corrections made by the editors, or originally by Dr. Tafel, have to do with spelling, grammar or other very obvious errors in the First Edition. For example, in no. 5194, in speaking of conjunction and of the will's being a vessel receptive of the good of love and charity, and the understanding one receptive of the truth of faith, a sentence in the First Edition reads: "*illa duo apud hominem nisi duo faciunt, nihil producitur . . .*" (unless these two with man make two (sic!), nothing is produced . . .). Obviously the second "*duo*" is an error which should be corrected to "*unum*," to make the sentence read "unless these two make one in man. . . ." Another example of an obvious error which needed to be corrected is found in no. 5247, where the Latin of the First Edition reads: "*Quae de sacerdote magno, filius Aharonis, et de Levitis statuta sunt. . .*" The word "*filius*" here is obviously an error, being in the nominative case when it should be in the ablative, either the singular "*filio*" or the plural "*filiis*"; and the Scriptural quotations which follow the sentence make it quite evident that it should be the plural "*filiis*," causing the sentence to read, in translation, "The statutes which concern the high priest, the sons of Aaron, and the Levites. . . ." Evidently the

printer made the very easy mistake of confusing Swedenborg's handwritten "*filii*" with "*filius*," and so printed it without noticing the grammatical error he perpetrated.

Only the obvious errors in the First Edition appear to have been corrected in the text of the Third Edition. Where there is any doubt as to what should be the correct reading, or when an indicated correction would affect the meaning of what was taught, the Editors have, like Dr. Tafel, retained the reading of the First Edition, and simply made a note pointing out the possibility of error and suggesting what might be the correct reading. For example in no. 5195, which reads: "*Et Pharaoh somnians: quod significet praevisum de naturali . . .*" ("And Pharaoh dreaming': that it signifies foresight concerning the natural . . ."); the editors suggest that "*provisum*" (foresight, provision) seems more correct than "*praevisum*," since it is more in keeping with the word used by Swedenborg in other places. However, it would seem to this reviewer that "*praevisum*" is the correct word here, since the number continues to say, "*etquia est Praevidentia seu praevisum, est quoque Providentia seu provisum . . .*" ("and because there is Pre-vision or foresight there is also Providence or provision . . ."). Another example of a possible correction suggested but not made in the text appears in connection with no. 6179, where in referring to heaven's being called a marriage, the First Edition reads: "*est enim conjunctio boni et veri ibi quae procedunt a Domino, quae id faciunt . . .*" ("for it is the conjunction of the good and truth there which proceed from the Lord which make it . . ."). The editors note that Dr. Tafel suggested that the plural "*faciunt*" should perhaps be the singlar "*facit*," which would make the relative pronoun "*quae*" refer to "*conjunctio*," and not to "*boni et veri*" as it does in the First Edition reading. The change would seem to make the statement fit in better with the context. It would appear, however, that the "*faciunt*" was not an error of the printer since it appears in the autograph. Swedenborg may have made a change in his final draft, but we cannot assume he did so, and we must accept the "*faciunt*" as correct, and that the sentence does intend us to think here of the good and truth proceeding from the Lord as making heaven.

Besides the obvious errors made by the printer of the First Edition, there are a great many differences between it and the

autograph which are noted by the editors. Of these the only ones that substantially affect doctrinal teaching and meaning appear to this reviewer to lie in the realm of additions which Swedenborg must have made in his final draft. For example the whole *Continuation concerning Influx and the Commerce of the Soul and Body* (nos. 6189–6215) which is included in the printed editions at the end of the chapter dealing with *Genesis 47* is omitted in the autograph. There can be no doubt from the nature, content and style of the article that it must have been included in the final draft the printer received from Swedenborg, even though it does not appear in the autograph.

All other differences appear to be, like the obvious errors, of a minor nature. They consist in such things as transposition of words, omission or inclusion of unimportant words, the changing of the preposition “*ab*” to “*ex*,” and *vice versa*, and other like details, none of which seems to make any real change in the meaning of the text.

These differences between the autograph and the First Edition, as well as any variant reading in the Second Edition of Dr. Tafel, together with all corrections made and suggested, are noted by the editors either by symbols in the body of the text, or in footnotes, or in the appendix, so that the student may know what appears in the various texts and may determine what in his opinion is the most authentic reading.

Perhaps the most interesting and valuable contribution the editors have made for the benefit of the students of the Church lies in their having noted all the corrections and changes Swedenborg himself made in his autograph. It is apparent that he had considerable difficulty accurately expressing in human language what had been revealed to him, and that he took great pains to safeguard the reader from needlessly drawing concepts that were not intended. He often made changes in what he had written down, crossing out words, phrases, and sometimes whole sentences and paragraphs, substituting other words or phrases, or rewriting the whole sentence and paragraph; frequently he inserted additional words or phrases to what he had written. Some of these corrections and insertions are made above the line, others in the margin, and still others on separate sheets of paper. The Editors have noted not only all these corrections and additions

Swedenborg made in his manuscript, but have indicated just how they were made, and where they appear.

The notations the editors have adopted are most helpful, being clear, relatively few and simple, and fairly easy to memorize. They tend to be on the small side and to be easily missed. But it is imagined this tendency would be overcome as a student became used to looking for them. Besides, their being inconspicuous would be most welcome to the reader who did not want to be distracted by notes.

The only complaint this reviewer has—and it is a very minor one—is that on occasion the reader is referred to notes appearing earlier in the volume, and at least on one occasion (see p. 230) to a note appearing in another volume altogether. It would have been better, it seems, and quite practical to have repeated the notes even if they were of no great significance. But as was said, this is a minor complaint and in no way takes away from the value of the work, nor from our pleasure in reading it.

The editors and the Swedenborg Society have well deserved the congratulation and thanks of the Church for undertaking to publish this Third Edition and for the fine scholarly work they have put into it.

NORBERT H. ROGERS

PHILOSOPHICAL NOTES

“What Is New?” This question is asked daily not only to seek information but to establish new standards. Thus what is new has become the standard for today to be supplanted by the standard of tomorrow which will be dictated by what is new then.

So often has this criterion been applied that the value attached to “standard” or “principle” is itself being challenged. In its place only that which is new has any importance.

Although examples can be easily drawn from the sciences, in the notes which follow examples are drawn from daily life. They are not trivial; they were pronounced with supposed authority by “leaders” and “scholars.” Therefore the examples serve to show that the criterion of newness is applied in all seriousness in many fields.