

MAN IN THE BACKGROUND: SWEDENBORG'S INFLUENCE IN THE BODY POLITIC[†]

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INTRODUCTION

Among the many features that characterize the post-Colonial era one stands out: the desire to explore the roots of human culture in general, and of individual groups and nations in particular. This effort is manifest at many scales, from the individual African-American or European seeking to know his or her lineage, to newly emerged nation states seeking to establish or re-establish their identity. This conference can be seen in this context to be part of this global movement.

A common thread through all this is that of human freedom or its absence in society. In recent history the ideas of the 18th century Swede Emanuel Swedenborg had significant influence in relation to this: in Russia through the role of Aleksandr Muravyóv in the emancipation of the serfs; in America through Lydia Francis Child's support for the abolition of slavery there; and in Australia through the political philosophy of Alfred Deakin who played a significant role in drafting the Australian constitution.

In this paper we shall first present a short biography of Swedenborg, and then highlight some elements of his philosophy that bear on matters of state and human freedom. Then in turn we shall consider the contributions of Child, Deakin, and Muravyóv, and explore the connections of their philosophy and aspects of their life's work to Swedenborgian ideas.

I shall then add some reflections on Immanuel Kant and the connections of Russian philosophy with German Idealism, suggesting that the place of Swedenborg here needs further examination. We will close with a few observations on Dostoyevsky.

EMANUEL SWEDENBORG (1688-1772)

Swedenborg was born in Stockholm, Sweden, January 29, 1688, third born child to Jesper and Sarah Behm Swedberg in a family of nine chil-

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dren. His mother died in 1696. Swedberg, who, in the course of his life was Bishop of Skara, later married Sarah Bergia, from whom Emanuel eventually inherited a considerable mining estate at Starbo. The independent means that this afforded allowed him to pursue a life of both practical activity in connection with the mining industry in service of the kingdom, and an intellectual life that ranged from ingenious mechanical inventions of various kinds to the most sublime of religious contemplation and writing. Swedberg died in London on March 29, 1772.

Swedberg's life beyond his formal education is customarily divided into three parts: the first in which his focus was on mechanical invention and physical science, spanned the period 1715 to 1734. During this time he edited Sweden's first technological journal *Daedalus Hyperboreus*, and published the three-volume work treating of the origin of the universe and of the metallurgy of iron and copper. In the second period (1734-1745) he devoted his energies to the search for the soul which led him to extensive exploration of the soul's kingdom, the human body, drawing on the works of the anatomists. This phase closed with the *De Culto et Amore Dei* ('The Worship and Love of God'), a poetic creation fable. In the third (1745-1772), his theological period, in response to a Divine call he penned some thirty volumes on matters dealing with the spiritual life of man. It was throughout this period that Swedberg had regular, conscious, communication with men and women in the spiritual world, which world for him was every bit as real and substantial as the earth where he dwelt with his fellow man.

This is not the place to elaborate on the details of Swedberg's wide-ranging contributions to our culture in general. We refer those interested to Hyde's *Bibliography* (1906) and Woofenden's *Swedenborg Researcher's Manual* (1988) for an overview of Swedberg's works. We note, too, that several biographies exist, numerous learned societies are devoted to him, there have been several international gatherings to honor him in 1910, 1938 and 1988, and his theological works are the basis for religious organizations throughout the world. His works continue to be translated, most recently into Japanese and Russian.

Concerning the man Swedberg, we note that he was in no sense charismatic, he sought no following, and established no religious movement. He had a normal share of ego which he fought to subdue. He wrote

religious books and published them, initially anonymously. He is an honored son of his homeland, and his mortal remains lie in Uppsala Cathedral.

Were we to think of his publishing career as beginning with the editorship of *Daedalus Hyperboreus* ('The Northern Inventor') (1716-18) with its focus on mechanical inventions, and note that his final publication was on Swedish currency and finance (1771), we see him, as it were, coming full circle. Beginning with matters mundane, and rising through science and philosophy to the exploration both of celestial and infernal realms of the spiritual world, Swedenborg closes his life here with concern for the practical well-being of his beloved homeland.

But now to the question at hand—Swedenborg's influence in the affairs of nations. We note first of all that as a member of the House of Nobles and Assessor of Mines, and as advisor to Charles XII, Swedenborg was necessarily involved with national affairs. However, we do not find in his literary output any works devoted to the enunciation of a political philosophy per se. This must be sought within the pages of his works that are devoted for the most part to theological and religious matters. We note at the outset also that the theory of government one can derive from his works does not find expression in his giving assent to one or another system of government; the reader is left to follow the consequences of Swedenborg's thought on his own.

Elements of Swedenborg's Philosophy

As with any one else, one cannot understand Swedenborg without at least some appreciation of the milieu in which he lived and worked. We can get a fair idea of the sources of the materials of his thought in *A Philosopher's Note Book*, the autographed copy of which is part of codex 36 in the library of the Royal Academy of Sciences, Stockholm, and first published in 1931 by the Swedenborg Scientific Association. Like many of his forebears and contemporaries, Descartes and Leibniz among them, the devout Christian Swedenborg was concerned about the tide of skepticism, atheism, and materialism that was rife in the eighteenth century and earlier.¹ This concern was also felt in Russia, as exemplified by Rusanov's

¹See, for example, Richard H. Popkin, *A History of Skepticism from Erasmus to Descartes* (New York: harper & Rowe, 1968).

belief concerning Kant that: "the goal of Kantian philosophy is two-fold: The overthrow of Christianity and its substitution not with deism but complete atheism."² The basis of all Swedenborg's philosophy, therefore, was the presumption of the existence of God, as testified to in Scripture.

Underpinning Swedenborg's concept of government are ontological and epistemological positions which we shall here point to without any attempt to make a critical, comparative, presentation. We begin with his cosmogony in which the physical universe is created from the Divine by "finition" of the Infinite, but without being a continuation of It, since this would result in Pantheism, a position with which Swedenborg had no sympathy. The "first natural point" is at the beginning of things, this being an energetic entity that bears rather striking resemblance to the center(s) of energy that are the starting point for creation as given by the modern "big bang" theory. The universe develops by ordered steps, leading ultimately to the appearance of living forms, culminating in man. The point of mentioning this is that Swedenborg's universe was not only one of law and order, but also one which is in a state of constant development. It is also one which is impressed throughout with the image of the Creator, the essential human image summed up in the notions of love (end or purpose), wisdom (providing the means; cause), and use (the material manifestation of the love; effect). This notion of the essential human is at the core of all Swedenborg's ontology, and is especially evident in man's own being and the structures of the institutions he creates.

This trilogy of end, cause and effect is not only seen as the essential nature of the Divine, expressed as the Divine Love, Wisdom and Proceeding Power, but is reflected in everything else. Thus, the Divine, the spiritual world, and the natural world (materially considered) exist in this end-cause-effect series. Also in man, it appears as will, understanding, and action, and in all other created entities as purpose for which, structure by means of which, and actual operation, of material and biological entities in nature. These planes of existence are distinct, and are in series of so-called "discrete degrees," and communicate by "correspondence," providing the mechanism of interaction of higher and lower planes. Affections, thought and speech, for example, are such a series. Correspondence

²Quoted in Thomas Nemeth, "Kant in Russia," *Studies in Soviet Thought* 36 (1988), p. 84.

theory is at the very heart of Swedenborg's ontology; but this is not the place to pursue it further.

Now for a word about his theory of knowledge and ideas. It must first be stated, indeed emphasized, that Swedenborg took the mystery out of consideration of the spiritual world by declaring that the stuff of consciousness, thoughts and affections, are spiritual entities; mental activities thus are spiritual processes. So for him, the shedding of the material body at death does not constitute the end of consciousness; willing and thinking continue as before, but consciously now in the so-called after-life. Certainly, one has the spiritual analog of a material body to get around in this spiritual realm, but it is every bit as real in terms of sense perception, only more refined, as the one employed in this world.

In terms of the origin of thought, therefore, this spiritual world of motivating affections is the source of ideas. These are not somehow generated by neuronal physico-chemical activity; the latter is simply the means for their expression in a material world. As Swedenborg put it, an entity on a higher discrete degree makes itself manifest on a lower one by selectively ordering entities on the lower plane to suit its purpose. But sense impressions are crucial, first to instigate the influence by correspondence of the spiritual plane; and secondly, to serve as a basis and containant, as Swedenborg called it, for the spiritual entities. Ideas, to become substantial, require a basis in the material world of sensation.

What bearing does this have on a theory of knowledge and our present concern? It is simply this: If one presumes that "affection is father to the thought" (as is said in common parlance), and if affections have their origin in the transcendental, spiritual world, then the identification of particular people with particular ideas takes on new meaning. Affections common to different people, be they in the same room or 10,000 leagues away, are likely to generate similar ideas. This would apply to the origin of the calculus, for example, as it would to ideas about the need for freedom for the human spirit to flourish. Knowledge, by this view, represents the fixation of affection in entities we call thoughts, and what we call truth, therefore, only has meaning in relation to the affection that gave rise to it. Hence it is, that Swedenborg can say of a devil that to him the false is true and evil is good, while to an angelic person, truth is what gives form to good, what make goodness manifest.

Finally, a word about Swedenborg's concept of goodness in relation to man. As we noted, the created universe consists of spiritual and material substances, both of which are equally real and dependent on each other for continuing existence, while both are also dependent on the constant influence of the Divine. In regard to men, the driving forces of their thoughts and actions are affections, which are as various as the stars of heaven, and which have their origin in the realm of the spirit. For Swedenborg, there are four great classes of loves from which all affections are derived: love to God, love to the neighbor, love of things of the world, and love of self. For a person in harmony with Divine creation, these motivating forces are subordinated as given, with concern for self taking last place. "Goodness" is the quality exhibited by such a person. If, however, this order is inverted, with concern for self at the head and love of God subordinated to all else, we have an evil man. Evil, then, is not some force somehow unrelated to the affairs of men but which nonetheless can affect them; it is simply the state of mind, and the consequent action, that characterizes men whose loves are in inverted order.

Swedenborg's Theory of Government

The most recent treatment of Swedenborg's political theory is that by Goodenough,³ and we refer the reader to it. For our part, we wish to emphasize a few special ideas that go beyond political theory per se, and consider some of Swedenborg's ideas relating to social organization.

The most all-embracing concept is that of the *Maximus Homo* (Grand Man), a concept that has distinct resemblance to microcosmic theory, in which man (a microcosm) as a single entity mirrors the whole universe (the macrocosm). In a parallel manner, just as in an organism the single cell has functions that answer to all those of the organism as a whole, so too in a societal form, all the functions of the individual are reflected in the society as a whole. It is through this interdependence of the parts that societies can act as a one.

³ Daniel W. Goodenough, "A Trust from God. A Survey of Swedenborg's Political Thought," in Erland J. Brock et al., *Swedenborg and His Influence* (Bryn Athyn: Academy of the New Church, 1988), pp. 135-153. The volume will hereinafter be referred to as *Influence*.

In such an organization individuals must subordinate their own self-interest to the greater good of larger units, while at the same time, the society must nurture the individual; there must be a reciprocal relationship. This principle is commonly recognized, as Swedenborg notes, with the illustration of the soldier who willingly makes the ultimate sacrifice for the good of his homeland, which, in its part had nurtured him.

The most concise statement of Swedenborg's concept of the ideal society is found in a small work *The Doctrine of Charity*.⁴ Here the author enumerates the elements of which the general good consists:

The general good consists of these things: that in the society or kingdom there shall be, I. What is Divine with them. II. There shall be justice with them. III. There shall be morality with them. IV. There shall be industry, knowledge, and uprightness with them. V. There shall be the necessaries of life. VI. There shall be the things necessary to their occupations. VII. There shall be the things necessary for protection. VIII. There shall be a sufficiency of wealth; because from this come the three former necessaries.

Note that this common good consists not only of spiritual things, but of natural ones too. Just as one cannot have a sound mind for long without a sound body, likewise the body politic cannot be in a sound state without the presence of principles of mercy, from love, and justice, from wisdom, which must be at the heart of society; as well, the availability of the necessaries of life through gainful employment and a sound economic base, act as the body of society. Are we not witnessing in the world today both the disintegration that results when there is a lack of any of these essential elements, and the gracefulness of societies where such order is established?

Finally, a word or two about freedom as viewed in the context of Swedenborgian thought.⁵ The mark of humanity is the capacity for rational thought in a sphere of freedom. Mankind, therefore, is constantly faced with choices, basically between good and evil as defined above; and his

⁴N. 130.

⁵The reader is referred to Swedenborg's *Angelic Wisdom about Divine Providence* (New York: Swedenborg Foundation) for a detailed treatment of his concept of freedom.

freedom consists in the fact of having the choice between them. Making choices in favor of good opens the path to a heavenly state, while favoring evil leads to hell. Collectively, man has to choose between creation of merciful and just societies, or the opposite. Freedom is central to our being human and it is the key to our salvation.

This being so, what relationship is there between man's freedom and the all-encompassing influence of the Divine? Swedenborg addresses this, employing the phrase *sicut ex se* (translated by Dr. J. Durban Odhner "as if on his own") to convey the idea that despite the ever-present influence of the Divine, man does have a real sense that he acts "as if on his own;" to conceive of a creator as a God of love without man having this sense of freedom would be a contradiction; love requires that the reciprocation it longs for be granted freely.⁶

Lydia Maria Child (1802-1880) and the anti-slavery movement⁷

Lydia Child was, in her day, America's foremost female author. It was, doubtless, because of this that she was able to exert the influence she did in helping to bring about the abolition of slavery in America. What interests us here is the fact that she was a reader of Swedenborg's theological works, one who saw in them a philosophy of man that judged slavery as abhorrent.

Child joined the ranks of the anti-slavery movement in 1833, several years after her first introduction to Swedenborg through her encounter with a Swedenborgian church in Maine. In 1836 she published *An Appeal in Favor of Americans called Africans*.⁸ This established her as "a major antislavery writer,"⁹ and several prominent people in the movement iden-

⁶ The best recent treatment of this difficult subject is given in Michael W. Stanley, "Appearance and Reality in the Relationship between Finite Soul and Infinite Source," *Influence* (1988), pp. 279-293.

⁷ We are indebted to Margaret M.R. Kellow of the University of Western Ontario, whose paper titled "Swedenborg's Influence on Antebellum Reform: The Case of Lydia Maria Child" presented to the Swedenborg Consultation at the 1991 AAR/SBL Annual Meeting, is the source of information in this section.

⁸ Published by John S. Taylor, New York, 1836. Reprinted in 1968 by Arno Press, New York.

⁹ Kellow, p. 1.

tified the work as being significant in bringing about their conversion to “immediatism” as opposed to “gradualism” in the abolition of slavery. Through this *Appeal* the Swedenborgian view of Africans would “profoundly alter the discourse on anti-slavery and American race relations both before and after the Civil war.”¹⁰

What was it about Swedenborgian thought that appealed to Child in connection with the Slavery issue? Kellow notes that “Swedenborg does not appear to have addressed the slavery issue directly...” which we have also confirmed. This is in keeping with Swedenborg’s consistently avoiding giving opinions or passing judgment on particular aspects of political life, as we have noted; he simply states matters of principles of conduct. Kellow points to a general affect on Child from Swedenborg, succinctly described in this way:

As she studied Swedenborg’s writings further she came to an understanding of duty and responsibility which would shape both her actions and her attitude to reform throughout her life. Child came to believe that she faced a choice between doing good and failing to do good; between attending to the welfare of others or attending to self.¹¹

This choice is the fundamental one we all face, both individually and collectively, as we have noted above.

But beyond this general principle of life, how did Swedenborg’s writings influence Child? Kellow argues that there are two particular aspects that are relevant. The first is the primacy that Swedenborg gives to freedom, which, by implication, argues against anyone holding others in subjugation. The second concerns Swedenborg’s statements regarding the internal, spiritual, nature of Africans. Quoting from *Heaven and Hell*¹² Kellow illustrates Swedenborg’s regard for Africans as follows: “In heaven the Africans are the most loved of all the Gentiles: they receive the goods and truths of heaven more easily [upon entry after death] than the rest;

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid., p. 5.

¹² N. 326.

they wished to be called the obedient, not the faithful." Based on this kind of idea, Child argued that because of their willingness to be obedient to laws of morality, Africans could play a special role "in the regeneration of the world."¹³ Kellow observes further that early followers of Swedenborg "in Sweden and later in England, were among the first to agitate against the slave trade."¹⁴

There were other arguments by Child that represent development of the Swedenborgian idea of the internal nature of Africans that, if unspoiled by the influence of contact with Europeans, could help bring about the restoration of society. In an editorial titled "The African Race" written in 1843 after she had been appointed editor of the *National Anti-Slavery Standard*, Child predicted that "the African race [is] destined to a higher civilization than any the world has yet known; higher, because it will be more gentle and reverential."¹⁵ What needs emphasis here is not the matter of race, but Child's opinion that civilization will be improved by its assumption of qualities of gentleness and reverence, qualities that have been down through the ages, and are now, advanced by the great religions of the world as necessary for the healing of the nations.

In her closing paragraph, Kellow says:

Throughout Child's life, Swedenborg's teaching constituted a lens through which she refracted the social, moral and political problems which confronted America, and her arguments on these questions embody aspects of the heavenly Doctrine, both implicitly and explicitly.¹⁶

ALFRED DEAKIN (1857-1919)

Alfred Deakin was an important figure in Australian political history. Of him, Gabay says: "One historian has aptly described him as 'the great phenomenon of Australian political history, even of Australian experi-

¹³ Ibid, p. 4.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 12.

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 15.

ence', not only for that long and illustrious career, but because Deakin was unusual among Australian intellectuals in his association with the 'Occult', in a lifelong quest for 'spiritual enlightenment and discipleship.'"¹⁷

Of his political career we note but a few things. The single most significant event that launched Deakin into political prominence was his being asked to lead the Victorian delegation to the Colonial Conference held in London in April, 1887. It was here that he challenged Lord Salisbury's Imperialist position, establishing himself as a leader in the struggle for federation, becoming "the prime mover in efforts to federate the Australian colonies."¹⁸ In this, Deakin was deeply involved in the building of a constitution, and regarding this Gabay observes:

...For men like Deakin, and perhaps Glynn, O'Connor, Quick and others, religiously minded and well versed in the art of compromise and the expediencies of politics, these delegates [to the Constitutional Convention] were doing far more. The Constitution would embody their highest social and political Ideals, drawing on the constitutional experience of the Mother country and of Switzerland, the United States, Canada and Norway, while modifying the Westminster system to Australian conditions. Moreover, for Deakin at least it was a Divine work, sketching the parameters of authority to guide untold generations, a document which could be altered with the 'progress' of society and its institutions, and which represented the highest fruits of Reason, which is given by God—'By Thy Light we shall see light' was a favorite Biblical passage—and it would be a work, moreover, created in Peace and

¹⁷ Al Gabay, unpublished manuscript, quoted with permission. The internal quote is from M. Roe, *Nine Australian Progressives, Vitalism in Bourgeois Social Thought 1890-1960*, St. Lucia, 1984, p. 18. Gabay's treatise on Deakin will appear later in 1992, published by Cambridge University Press. I first met Gabay when he gave a paper titled "Alfred Deakin and Swedenborg: An Australian Experience" at the 1988 tricentennial Swedenborg Symposium held at Bryn Athyn, Pennsylvania. Aside from my own reflections on Deakin, the sources of all I know about him are Gabay's published paper (see Brock *et al.*, 1988) and the manuscript above, which Gabay kindly sent to me specifically for preparation of this paper. I am most grateful for this kindness.

¹⁸ *Influence*, p. 382.

espousing the best Liberal political principles that negotiations among men could secure."¹⁹

In the next decade following the inauguration of the Commonwealth on January 1, 1901, Deakin was to become First Attorney-General, was three times the Prime Minister, and was instrumental in establishing "the High Court, Pensions, and the Conciliation and Arbitration system, and other measures that earned Australia a reputation in this era as the 'social laboratory' of the world."²⁰

What, then, was the nature and origin of Deakin's religious thought and political philosophy? From his youth he was an avid reader of literature of all kinds, and through this became well acquainted with the great works of the Western cultural heritage, as well as learning of the religions of the East. Early in life he aspired to become a writer, although things did not go in his favor in this pursuit; but over a period of more than 50 years he wrote privately. His writings consisting mainly of the "Gospels" (among them, "A New Pilgrim's Progress," "The Gospel According to Shakespeare," and "The Gospel According to Swedenborg"), and "experience narratives." These were mostly concerned with religion and spirituality. It is in the "Gospel According to Swedenborg" that Gabay has found record of the influence of the northern Seer, and to this we shall now turn.

Of the Swedenborg gospel, Gabay writes:

Deakin had planned an extended article or a small volume giving a modern rendering of the vital teachings of Emanuel Swedenborg since at least 1881. The 'Gospel According to Swedenborg' written in about nine months between Parliamentary sittings during 1889-90, is the longest [600 pp.] and the most important of the gospels...[I]t was a selective excursus through Swedenborg's considerable body of writings...With this gospel Deakin tried to reach some definitive theological formulations on questions like the nature of religion, on duty and morality and, as he put it, on the

¹⁹ Al Gabay manuscript, p. 112.

²⁰ *Influence*, p. 382.

relation between 'Creator and creature'. Its major impetus was I believe a religious labour, undertaken partly as a response to the Grand Prophecy.²¹

Deakin was a philosophic idealist; for him, the life of the mind was all-important, and while accepting the reality of the natural world, it was not paramount. In his Swedenborg gospel he "affirmed the reality of the future life, the rule of law, and a Divine Justice throughout the Kosmos."²² Deakin's personal religion (fashioned in an eclectic manner from his wide reading) included a striving for an Inner Light, which could be gained, he believed, through reflection on sacred texts, as exemplified in the writings of especially noble lives, of which Swedenborg was "the greatest exemplar."²³

The Ideal of Selflessness was central in Deakin's religious thought. This ideal becomes actual when a man chooses, in an act of the will, to respond to the influx of good, which in Swedenborgian terms is constantly playing on man, expressed in Scripture allegorically in the image of the Lord "standing at the door" and knocking, waiting for man to allow Him entrance. This inflowing goodness manifests itself in a life of self-denial for the sake of service to others. In contrast to this, for Deakin, following Swedenborg, "Hell was selfishness."²⁴

This did not mean, however, that the individual was to live in subjugation to higher authority. For him, a just society was one "that would minimize class privilege so that the individual within society might reach his full potential enfranchisement, political, moral and spiritual."²⁵

²¹Gabay manuscript, p. 121. Early in life Deakin had developed an interest in spiritualism, participating in seances and contacting mediums. This kind of interest was quite common in the eighteenth century. In 1880 he received a prophecy through a medium that "before long, I should be officially sent to London to appear for Victoria before a tribunal which she described as the highest in the land" (*Influence*, p. 381). When Deakin received his invitation to lead the Victorian delegation to London, he saw this as the fulfillment of the "Grand Prophecy."

²²Gabay manuscript, p. 130.

²³Ibid., p. 111.

²⁴Ibid., p. 115.

²⁵Ibid., p. 113.

We note that in Swedenborg, Deakin found a blend of Revelation, a kind of scientific spiritualism, and an appeal to Reason that he found very satisfying. In respect to this, Gabay writes:

...He represented the best of both worlds: a hard headed scientist who translated his analytic mode of thinking to celestial spheres without losing the power of discursive reason, and a theologian who incorporated an immediate Revelation with a pious regard for the Bible. Hence a transcendental Revelation was received via the Reason, rather than through an unifying mystical experience like that claimed by Plotinus or Jacob Boehme.²⁶

Finally we observe that for Deakin the Ideal of Unselfish Love coupled with Swedenborg's doctrine of use found embodiment in a concept of practical ethics by which a man should place his neighbor's welfare before his own, in accord with the teachings of Jesus.

ALEKSANDR MURAVYÓV (1792-1863)

General Muravyóv first encountered Swedenborg when he was Governor of Archangel. The Reverend Dr. Jonathan Bayley, pastor of the Kensington Church of the New Jerusalem in London, was a friend of Muravyóv. It is through Bayley that we learn that a friend of his, the Reverend Elijah Smith, a Church of England minister who had served in Archangel, met Murayóv there as his teacher of Hebrew. Smith then learned of Murayóv's great interest in Swedenborg's works, having come upon the seer's *Doctrine of Life* in a Moscow bookstore. Subsequently, he read all of Swedenborg's works available in French or the original Latin.²⁷

After recounting this, Bayley goes on to tell how Muravyóv, unable to publish Swedenborg's works in Russia, had secretaries make copies of the smallest works, giving these to friends and family. "A considerable num-

²⁶ Ibid., p. 122.

²⁷ Rev. Dr. Bayley, *New Church Worthies or Early but Little-known Disciples of the Lord in Diffusing the Truths of the New Church*, (London: James Speirs, 1884), p. 202.

ber of the Russian nobility, as well as a large portion of his own family—one of the most distinguished in the empire—came by this means to delight in the truths of the New Church.”²⁸

Bayley describes Muravyóv’s life as a “constant commentary on his [Swedenborg’s] doctrines.” In support of this contention, Bayley records what was written by an “eminent literary man” in a local journal at the time of Muravyóv’s appointment to the governorship of Nijni-Novgorod. We read:

...He is sage such as there are but few. Grant us everywhere such governors, and in ten years we shall have progressed so much that we shall not recognise ourselves. The governor is mild, sensible, independent, experienced: of a HOLY LIFE, accessible at all times, and to everyone; fond of justice and order, yet merciful. In short, he is native gold and silver; a treasure of goodness and truth without alloy.²⁹

With this testimony of his character, it is not surprising that Muravyóv found serfdom abhorrent. Other members of the family held radical political positions also. Nikita Mikhailovich Muravyóv, for example, died after 20 years in labor camps for his involvement in the Decembrist uprising of 1825³⁰; and Aleksandr also spent nine years in exile for his advocacy of the emancipation of the serfs. Upon being pardoned, he returned to become active again “to convince the powerful of the land of the sacred claims of man, as man, to entire liberty of person and property, when unstained by crime.”³¹

Eventually, Muravyóv was to become president of the committee to prepare for emancipation. The committee first convened on February 19, 1858, in Nijni-Novgorod. It was at this meeting that Muravyóv gave the speech which embodies Christian teachings as given in Scripture and

²⁸ Ibid., p. 203.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Anders Hallengren, “Russia, Swedenborg, and the Eastern Mind,” *The New Philosophy* 93 (1990), p. 398.

³¹ Bayley, *ibid.*, p. 204.

Swedenborg's works. Bayley quotes it in full, and from it we select passages which testify to his religious philosophy of political life.

Gentlemen: Having arranged with the grand marshal, the committee, called through the confidence of our sovereign to discuss the measures necessary for the amelioration of the condition of the peasants...proceeds this day, the 19th of February, to the opening of its labour...

Gentlemen: Enter fully into the spirit of your exalted mission...Do not permit your personal or material interests to sway you in the work you have to accomplish...Surely material interests ought to yield to moral interests! Ought you not to prove this by your acts?...

...Render to man what belong to man, and you will justify the confidence of the sovereign and the hope of the nation. I will say more, you will merit the admiration of the whole world, whose eyes are fixed upon you. Your labours will receive the blessing of the Most High, and those of the entire human race. History will rank you among the promoters of justice, and of love of the neighbour, while it names you the founders of the prosperity of your country.³²

This work came to fruition with the emancipation of 25 million serfs in 1861.

After Muravyóv's death on December 18, 1863, his friend Jonathan Bayley visited his family, arriving in Moscow in July, 1866. While staying with Madame Muravyóv, he met and conversed with Cleopatra Princess Schahoffskoy, herself a student of Swedenborg's works.³³

³² *Ibid.*, pp. 206-207.

³³ Anders Hallengren, *loc. cit.*, p. 400. Hallengren draws our attention to the fact that for Cleopatra, the teaching of Swedenborg and of the Russian Orthodox church were one. He quotes her as follows: "If anyone desires to refute the doctrine of Swedenborg in its very base, he must begin by destroying the very fundamental principles of the orthodox doctrine" (p. 402).

It is, perhaps, fitting to close our comments on Aleksandr Muravyóv with the inscription in the Greek Testament given Bayley on his departure from Moscow:

Keep this Holy text, not for my sake, but for that of the two beloved and enlightened spirits—your friends in the Lord, to whom, both, it successively belonged, the father and son Mouravieff, who from their heavenly home bless you, I am sure, for the consolation you have afforded to their lonely friends remaining yet on earth.

All yours in the Lord,
Cleopatra Princess Schahoffskoy

Moscow, 20th July, 1866.³⁴

SWEDENBORG IN RUSSIA

In preparing for this paper I have had the pleasure of gaining some glimpses into the richness of the Russian philosophic tradition. Anything I could say about it would be completely inadequate. But I have read enough to sense that Swedenborg is there, represented at times overtly, but at other times only in shared ideas which embody fundamental truths about humanity to which all men, wherever they are, can assent.

There is, here, a field largely untouched. For a scholar equipped for the task, there is a link to follow through Kant and German idealists, Schelling and Schopenhauer in particular. This has received some attention already, but there is more to do in making connections with Russian philosophy. As is well known, Kant did a serious disservice to the Swede through his *Träume eines Geistersehers* ('Dreams of a Spirit-Seer'), although later in life he acknowledged a debt to Swedenborg.³⁵ One effect, in

³⁴ Bayley, *loc. cit.*, pp. 209-210

³⁵ See Robert H. Kirven, "Swedenborg and Kant Revisited: The Long Shadow of Kant's Attack and a New Response," in Erland J. Brock *et al.*, *Swedenborg and His Influence* (Bryn Athyn: Academy of the New Church, 1988), pp. 103-120. Also Gottlieb Florschütz, *Swedenborgs verborgene Wirkung auf Kant. Swedenborg und die okkulten Phänomene aus der Sicht von Kant und Schopenhauer* (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 1992), and now being presented in English translation in this journal.

Germany particularly, of Kant's earlier ridiculing of Swedenborg in *Dreams*, was that for those concerned about preserving their respectability among their academic peers, it was felt necessary to keep any Swedenborgian influence undisclosed. The classic case of this is that of Goethe.³⁶ But with the growing recognition of the similarities between aspects of Swedenborg's and Kant's philosophy, and the further detailing of Swedenborg's influence in various quarters, there may follow a greater degree of willingness to take Swedenborg more seriously as a factor in the development of modern philosophy.

DOSTOYEVSKY AND SWEDENBORG³⁷

In reflecting on the nature of Dostoyevsky's power to engross the reader in *Crime and Punishment*, I realized that for me it was that I was drawn into the inner life of Raskolnikov, reflecting the author's ability to see into the hearts and minds of men—to see into the “internal man” as Swedenborg would put it. In doing so, Dostoyevsky puts a mirror to ourselves.

In the context of this paper, we single out a few things in the masterpiece that relate to some elements we have discussed. Firstly note that Dostoyevsky alludes to the emancipation of the serfs when, in conversing about social conditions and the murder, Razumihin says “Then the great hour struck...”³⁸, giving emphasis to that event which, clearly, to the author was a signal one. And later, Razumihin declares with great passion in the course of a conversation with Pulcheria Alexandrovna “Talk non-

³⁶ See G.C.L. Schuchard, “The Last Scene in Goethe's Faust,” *The New Philosophy* (Jan.-June 1982), pp. 31-63.

³⁷ Some treatments of connections between these writers are as follows: Czeslaw Milosz, “Dostoyevsky and Swedenborg,” in *Emanuel Swedenborg: A Continuing Vision*, edited by Robin Larsen (New York: Swedenborg Foundation, 1988), pp. 159-168; Anders Hallengren, “Russia, Swedenborg, and the Eastern Mind,” *The New Philosophy* 93(1990), pp. 391-407; Erin C. Martz, “Dostoyevsky's Christianity: Emanuel Swedenborg's Contribution,” *The New Philosophy* 91(1988), pp. 669-682; and Erin C. Martz's preface (“Swedenborg's Influence in Russia,”) to the Russian translation of Sig Synnestvedt's *The Essential Swedenborg*, (Swedenborg Foundation & Hermitage Publishers, 1991).

³⁸ In a footnote, the translator notes “The emancipation of the serfs in 1861 is meant.” *Crime and Punishment*, transl. by Constance Garnett (New York: Random House, 1956), p. 137.

sense, but talk your own nonsense, and I'll kiss you for it. To go wrong in one's own way is better than to go right in some one else's. In the first case you are a man, in the second case you are nothing better than a bird."³⁹ Here lies a statement of freedom and a declaration that to be free is to be human, blending nicely with the earlier allusion to emancipation.

Remember how, after being drawn through the agony brought on by Raskolnikov's total preoccupation with himself, and by his arrogant disregard for the well-being of others, Raskolnikov has the terrifying dream of warring mankind, in what is clearly an apocalyptic allusion, which closes with reference to "a few men who could be saved in the whole world. They were the chosen people, destined to found a new race and a new life, to renew and purify the earth..."⁴⁰ Then, at the close of the story, after Sonia comes to him, and by a seeming miracle Raskolnikov undergoes a momentous internal change (which signals the end of his total absorption with self), he realises the love that Sonia had constantly felt for him. Could she symbolize what Deakin had called the Inflowing Goodness, that inner presence of God's love with man that alone can turn him from the destruction that is wrought by self-centeredness, to the sweetness of life lived by the ideal of unselfish love?

...They were both pale and thin; but those sick pale faces were bright with the dawn of a new future, of a full resurrection into a new life. They were renewed by love; the heart of each held infinite sources of life for the heart of the other.⁴¹

Would it be too much to suggest that these closing passages are prophetic? In the dream we see the horror of events perpetrated in the 20th century as man has been driven by the senseless, destructive passion of untamed self-love, and in the closing tenderness of Raskolnikov's and Sonia's awakened love, see the promise of a future for all of mankind. □

³⁹ Ibid., p. 182.

⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 490.

⁴¹ Ibid., p. 492.

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