



EDWARD FRANKLIN ALLEN, SR.

1907–2000

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RESURRECTION ADDRESS

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Rev. Kurt Ho. Asplundh

Life is full of questions. Some are in the Word, as where David asks the Lord, “What is man that You are mindful of him . . . ?” (Ps. 8: 4). When we contemplate the starry heavens and the majesty of the Lord’s great works of creation, we may wonder what our little part is in all of this.

One of the most universal pursuits in life is the pursuit of knowledge. It continues beyond life in this world. We read in the Heavenly Doctrine of the discussion of important ideas in heaven and how spirits there who love truths from spiritual affection eagerly gather to join in these “sports of wisdom” (CL 132).

Human minds crave knowledge and the answers to life’s questions. The activity of the mind is a special gift from the Lord. Thought is uniquely human. Rational and intellectual thought is exhilarating, but also demanding. Often it is described with words used for extreme exertion: “wrestling with ideas,” “agonizing over the answers,” “giving birth to a concept.”

Growing up, we have a youthful incentive to learn, to think, to challenge and understand our world. We all pass through a learning phase when we are in the market for ideas and theories. To meet this demand, society has developed institutions of formal education, particularly those of “higher education.” Here it is that most of us encounter the world of ideas—and then leave it behind as we move on to our offices and occupations.

But some choose a lifetime of confrontation with ideas and questions—as professional educators. Their love is the life of the mind and the desire to stimulate other minds to consider the questions, the puzzles, and the ongoing search for truth in their specific fields of inquiry.

It was this love which blossomed and grew in the heart of Edward Allen during his long earthly life and which, as he awakens now in the spiritual world, will continue unabated.

Edward Allen was born more than 92 years ago, in August of 1907. He received his primary and secondary school education in Colorado where he was raised by his parents, Percy and Caroline (Stoesser) Allen. He came East to attend the Academy College in 1924, having just turned 17 years of age.

He began his life's work two years later, while still an undergraduate, being employed part-time to teach mathematics and science courses in the Academy Secondary School. Upon graduation, in 1928, Edward Allen was called to full time employment at the Academy, a career in teaching here which continued until his retirement in 1980. For more than half a century and for three generations of students, Edward Allen was a scholar, teacher, and mentor to young New Church people. His interest in ideas about the wonders of nature and philosophical thought was exciting to many, his classroom stories unforgettable.

As one former student wrote upon hearing of his death, "Edward Allen was a strong role model for me during my college days here . . . and an inspiration for me to later join the college faculty" (Greg Baker 2/21/00).

We cannot enumerate here all the courses, the professional development, the committee and department responsibilities which Edward Allen undertook in the course of his tenure, which were considerable. Nor can we but note his contribution during World War II as a research scientist engaged in the development of important military systems for the navy and air force. Let it be said of his career simply that he gradually progressed from the study and teaching of science and mathematics to the study and teaching of philosophy. He was named, in 1977, the year he gave up full-time teaching, "philosopher-in-residence."

About this time, Edward Allen wrote to a colleague: "One of the most important needs of the Academy is *thought* that brings our distinctive thoughts together . . . The *use* of philosophy requires dedicated work by minds goaded to bridge gaps that separate persons engaged in intellectual activities" (Letter to D. C. Fitzpatrick).

In the realm of higher education and thought, philosophers constitute a special category. Theirs is the interest in ideas that offer a foundation and structure for all thought, or ideas about ideas.

The Heavenly Doctrine often speaks negatively about philosophy, how it “blinds minds” (SD 2313), dwells in mere terms (SD 1604, 2263), and often confounds good and truth instead of illuminating it (AC 5556e). These negative connotations refer, however, to an abuse of philosophy common in Swedenborg’s day in which there were insane efforts to penetrate Divine arcana by natural thought and reasoning (SD 3949; AC 2124). Such an approach to the truth of heaven, from below, so to speak, is impossible and darkens the mind.

On the other hand, there is a true philosophy which is useful and necessary. It is such that it accords with the things in the Word. Once this was illustrated to Swedenborg in the spiritual world by one there whom he believed to be Aristotle. He was of a genius quite different from the so-called “schoolmen” of his day. He used terms as they did, but such that they “were forms of expression by which he described interior things . . .” He accepted these interior things and labored to describe and explain them in rational terms. He had been stirred to such things “by the delight of affection,” we are told, “and the desire of knowing the things which are of thought . . . He followed obediently what his spirit dictated” (AC 4658: 2).

In the New Church and particularly in New Church education there is an exalted place and use for true philosophy. It is to be a servant of religion and a useful mental discipline for the consideration of spiritual as well as natural ideas.

It was with such an understanding that our good friend, Edward Allen, viewed the study of philosophy as he progressively entered into it. It seems fitting, as we gather to celebrate his resurrection, to reflect on ideas close to his heart, ideas he will awaken to explore in the spiritual world with a renewed energy, heightened clarity, and new sense of delight.

The Rev. Dan Goodenough, now President of the Academy, wrote of Edward Allen in a message to the faculty announcing his death: “His greatest contribution to the Academy mission was his ability to stimulate

and inspire others, both ministers and lay people, to look seriously at philosophical issues . . . He cared less about whether we agreed with this or that perspective of his, than about whether we truly faced the intellectual questions that are there, and that he kept asking" (Dan Goodenough, (February 21, 2000).

We noted earlier that thinking about questions was hard work, demanding knowledge, discipline, and effort. While many people retire from this field of inquiry, particularly inquiry concerning spiritual issues and their application in life, after brief exposure in formal education, the fact is that we should never stop thinking about these things. The life of a New Church person, of a regenerating person, requires alert philosophical thinking. This ability has been given to us by the Lord so that we may be lifted up from a life immersed in natural and selfish thought and see from a higher perspective. Swedenborg wrote in his pre-theological work, *The Economy of the Animal Kingdom*, "thus to ascend is to ascend above ourselves; for then the love of self stands far below; and above it stands the love of country; and above this the love of God. They who ascend are they that live as true men . . . heroes among mortals" (EAK 287).

Professor Allen reiterated to his students in philosophy: "To call ourselves New Churchmen we have to be better than the best Christians." By this he meant that we must take the best of the philosophy and the thinking of the past, then infill it and make it alive with the principles of the new philosophy drawn from the new revelation. A challenging task. One in which he was continually engaged to the end of his long life.

One of the forums for his expression of ideas was the Swedenborg Scientific Association's publication, *The New Philosophy*. As editor for many years, he contributed extensive notes which were appreciated for their stimulation of philosophical reflections.

Edward Allen had a lifelong career at the Academy, but this was not his only love, or his only activity. He developed an avocation in art, a right-brain activity to balance his intellectual left-brain efforts. Many of his paintings are on display in the Academy. But of greater significance was his marriage.

Early in his career, he married Sue Arrington, a young New Church woman from Baltimore. Two children were born to them, Natalie Sue and Edward Franklin, Jr. The Allens were married 61 years before Sue died in

1991. Fifty of those years, Sue was a constant and supportive force in their life together. They shared a quiet life in a little house surrounded by Sue's gardens. She was a horticulturalist with a green thumb. Ed built the stone structures for her step gardens, literally moving the rocks whose physical weight and atomic structure frequently were the object of his abstract thought. Sadly, during the last eleven years of her life, Sue suffered a progressive dementia, spending several of those years in a nursing home. Edward's devotion to his wife became evident then as never before. When he could no longer care for her at home, and reluctantly moved her to the nursing home, he was a daily visitor, cheerful and attentive, though Sue could not respond. He kept his vigil, faithful to the end. Here was a conjugal friendship in action, a friendship the Writings call "tranquil, secure, lovely, and full of courtesy" (CL 290). A tenderness was in it. Since then, nine more years have passed as Edward himself has aged and declined, becoming more dependent upon his children for his own care.

How grateful we can be in the New Church to know that death reverses the aging process, to know that the Lord restores those who die in old age to an eternal youthfulness. As we are taught in the *Apocalypse Explained*: "Those who are in true conjugal love, after death, when they become angels, return to their early manhood and to youth, the males, however spent with age, becoming young men, and the wives, however spent with age, becoming young women" (AE 1000: 4). It is heartening to think of the couple meeting now in the spiritual world with the opportunity to take up their life together again, not for 60 years, but forever.

Edward sometimes expressed doubt of his worthiness for this, a sure sign that he would be worthy. "I don't think I will be with her," he said, "but maybe Sue will invite me to dinner sometime." We are assured that, after resurrection, "husband and wife come together and congratulate each other, and continue together . . . according to their delight in living together in the world" (HH 494).

There are schools in the spiritual world and places called gymnasias, or gymnasiums, where spirits gather. These are not for the physical sports which we associate with gymnasiums here, but are for intellectual sports. They are forums for the consideration and discussion of ideas. We can readily imagine Edward Allen being drawn to such activities in the next world and entering with enthusiasm into the discussions. No longer frus-

trated by the inadequacies of natural expression, Edward will find the joy of being able to express in a few words ideas that he labored with many words to express here. We can imagine too, that soon he will find his eternal use in a society of the new heaven devoted to the education of the young in their preparation for the eternal life of heaven. For while clear thinking from spiritual law may be easier in heaven than on earth, it is no less important there. “For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways,” says the Lord. “For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts” (Isa. 55: 8-9).

“What is man that You are mindful of him?” (Ps. 8: 4) David asked in his Psalm. Later, he answered his own question: “I will praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; marvellous are Your works, and that my soul knows very well” (Ps. 139: 14). *Amen.*

Readings from the Word

Psalms 8; Isaiah 55: 6–13; Matt. 6: 19–21; and selections from *Arcana Coelestia* 129, *True Christian Religion* 697, and *Apocalypse Explained* 1000 [given below]

Every one may know that man is governed by the principles he assumes, be they ever so false, and that all his knowledge and reasoning favor his principles; for innumerable considerations tending to support them present themselves to his mind, and thus he is confirmed in what is false. He therefore who assumes as a principle that nothing is to be believed until it is seen and understood, can never believe, because spiritual and celestial things cannot be seen with the eyes, or conceived by the imagination. But the true order is for man to be wise from the Lord, that is, from His Word, and then all things follow, and he is enlightened even in matters of reason and of memory-knowledge (*in rationalibus et scientificis*). For it is by no means forbidden to learn the sciences, since they are useful to his life and delightful; nor is he who is in faith prohibited from thinking and speaking as do the learned of the world; but it must be from this principle—to believe the Word of the Lord, and, so far as possible, confirm spiritual and celestial truths by natural truths, in terms familiar to the learned

world. Thus his starting-point must be the Lord, and not himself; for the former is life, but the latter is death. (AC 129)

I once saw not far from me a meteoric display. I saw a cloud divided into little clouds, some of which were blue, and some dark; and I saw them dashing against each other as it were, with rays of light glittering in streaks across them; which at one time appeared sharp like pointed swords, and again blunt like broken swords, now the streaks would shoot out at each other, and again they withdrew into themselves, exactly like combatants. In this way those differently colored clouds seemed to be fighting with each other, but it was only play. As this display did not seem to be far from me, I raised my eyes and looked at it carefully, and beheld boys, young men, and old men entering into a house built of marble on a foundation of porphyry. The phenomenon was over this house. I then spoke to one of those who were entering, and asked him what was there.

He replied, "It is a gymnasium, where youths are initiated into various matters pertaining to wisdom."

[2] Hearing this, I entered with them. I was in the spirit, that is, in a state like that of the inhabitants of the spiritual world, who are called angels and spirits. And behold, in the gymnasium opposite the entrance was a desk, in the center were benches, round about the sides were seats, and over the entrance was an orchestra. The desk was for the youths who were to give answers to the problem to be proposed on that occasion; the benches were for the auditors, the seats at the sides for those who had answered wisely on former occasions, and the orchestra for older men, who were to be arbiters and judges. In the center of the orchestra was a pulpit, where a wise man, whom they called the head teacher was sitting, who proposed the problems to which the youths gave answer from the desk. (TCR 697)

[4] Those who are in true conjugal love, after death, when they become angels, return to their early manhood and to youth, the males, however spent with age, becoming young men, and the wives, however spent with age, becoming young women. Each partner returns to the flower and joys of the age when conjugal love begins to exalt the life with new delights,

and to inspire playfulness for the sake of proliferation . . . As such continue to grow young more interiorly it follows that true conjugal love continually increases and enters into its charms and satisfactions, which have been provided for it from the creation of the world, and which are the charms and satisfactions of the inmost heaven, arising from the love of the Lord for heaven and the church, and thus from the love of good for truth and truth for good, which loves are the source of every joy in the heavens. Man thus grows young in heaven because he then enters into the marriage of good and truth; and in good there is the conatus to love truth continually, and in truth there is the conatus to love good continually; and then the wife is good in form and the husband is truth in form. From that conatus man puts off all the austerity, sadness, and dryness of old age, and puts on the liveliness, gladness, and freshness of youth, from which the conatus lives and becomes joy. [5] I have been told from heaven that such then have the life of love, which cannot otherwise be described than as the life of joy itself . . . (AE 1000)

EDWARD F. ALLEN AND *THE NEW PHILOSOPHY*

Donald C. Fitzpatrick, Jr.

Professor Edward F. Allen's involvement with the journal of the Swedenborg Scientific Association spanned six decades. His first published article, "Swedenborg's Controversy with Celsius," appeared in the October 1936 issue and his final one, "Swedenborg's Concept of the True Philosopher," appeared in the January 1997 issue.

In the years between these two, he contributed other articles as well as the addresses he had delivered to annual meetings of the association. His President's Reports during his two terms as the association's President (May 1949 to May 1963, and May 1972 to May 1977) and his Editor's Notes during his time as Editor of *The New Philosophy* (1959 to 1970) also appeared in the journal's pages.

In addition to these, he published "Philosophical Notes" beginning in the January 1955 issue of the journal and continuing until the July issue in 1990. He began numbering these notes with number 222 in the April 1968 issue, noting that he did so in order to make it easier to refer to them. The final numbered note was number 476 published in the January 1988 issue, but others followed until the final one in 1990.

In these "Philosophical Notes," as in most of the things that he wrote, Professor Allen's aim was to encourage others to study and think about philosophy in general and the philosophical works of Emanuel Swedenborg in particular. Perhaps the best tribute that the journal can offer to one who contributed so much to its uses will be to continue to promote these things.

