

## NOTES BY THE EDITOR

The next issue of the NEW PHILOSOPHY will contain the seventh and final installment of Dr. Hugo Lj. Odhner's study "The Human Mind." In this closing paper the author considers the rational, its conscious disciplines and its superconscious degrees, and then rounds out the study with a brief reference to that realm of the mind which only Divine revelation can rightly describe. While this goes, in a sense, beyond the stated purposes of this journal, it is obvious that without some consideration of these aspects of the subject the study would be incomplete.

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Pressure of other duties has interrupted the series describing Philosophy courses offered in the Academy of the New Church College that was begun with Professor Edward F. Allen's two-part article "A Course in Natural Philosophy." However, the series will be resumed in the next issue with the first of two articles by Mr. Charles S. Cole on the course, Introduction to Philosophy, in which he is associated with the Right Rev. Willard D. Pendleton.

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In the report of the Editorial Board to the last Annual Meeting it was stated that a series of articles on the main schools of philosophic thought was under consideration. The article on Transcendentalism in the present issue by Mr. E. Bruce Glenn is the first step in that direction. Regular publication cannot be promised, but the series will be continued.

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Editorial reference was made in the July issue to the forthcoming second volume of the *Letters and Memorials of Emanuel Swedenborg* which is now in the hands of the printer. We are informed that the work is going through the press smoothly and that publication may be looked for before the end of the year.

Readers of the NEW PHILOSOPHY who appreciated the facile entry into the documentary source material for Swedenborg the sage that was afforded by the first volume will be absorbed by the insights here given into Swedenborg the seer. For in this volume,

woven into the same fascinating continuous story, are the letters, and the state papers offered in the Swedish Diet, by Swedenborg from 1749 to the end of his earthly life. Dr. Acton has long been recognized as an authority on Swedenborgiana, in which field he has a distinguished record as translator and editor, and the publication of this second volume will complete a work to which all future students of Swedenborg will be heavily indebted.

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If learned works are to be preserved in a state of use they must be kept available, and this involves the reissuing of works that are out of print. At the last Annual Meeting of the Association the Board of Directors reported that it had authorized reproduction by photo-offset of *Psychological Transactions*, *Generation*, and the two volumes of the *Economy of the Animal Kingdom*. We are now advised that the first two works have been printed and are being bound, and that all four volumes will be available before the end of the year.

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Experience, geometry, and reason are named by Swedenborg as the means leading to a true philosophy. Although experience and reason are integral, geometry as a means is not developed in his system of philosophy, as far as we are aware. It is useful to realize that not only must experience precede reason—by which the human mind organizes, interprets, and understands it—but the mind must have some presupposed categories according to which it does interpret the facts of experience.

This is apparently overlooked by those who loosely proclaim or blindly accept the infallibility of science. For science must, and does, presuppose certain things and having done so it then proves by assumption. Science has not, for example, actually proved the uniformity of all nature; it presumes that the uniformities it has discovered and observed can be taken as a reliable indication of the whole, and thus proves the uniformity of nature by asserting that nature is uniform.

The same is true of philosophy, of systems and especially of the philosophies by which men live. Every system of philosophy uses, in the phrase of the day, a value judgment which becomes its criterion of what is important and what are the significant facts, and

from which it reasons about and interprets those facts. Although we talk glibly about allowing the facts to speak for themselves, they do not become articulate until they have been ordered into a certain presupposed pattern and weighed and evaluated within its framework. Before any conclusion can be drawn from the facts of experience a value judgment must be made; and it cannot be formed by looking coldly and objectively at the facts because it is the category by which the mind looks at the facts and tries to understand them.

Belief, in other words, is a presumption in the sense that it cannot be proved by the scientific method. But this is true of all beliefs. If religion cannot be proved scientifically, neither can it be disproved. A man may hold, if he so chooses, that the supranatural does not exist; yet he cannot know or prove this, he can only believe it. But that belief, which is formed by the nature of his will, then determines his attitude to life and the way in which he reasons about the facts of nature and of experience; the ones he selects as decisive, the interpretation he gives them, the conclusions he reaches.

Swedenborg is not unique, then, because he started with certain assumptions that could not be proved by the scientific method. In that alone he would be no better and no worse than any other scientist or philosopher. What distinguishes him is the assumptions with which he started—that the universe is a Divine creation from first to last, that it is possible to discover the soul in its kingdom and valuable to do so as a means of leading men to the worship and love of God, that a true philosophy will be in accord with the Word of God, and others which are known to his readers.

These postulates, which may be called presuppositions, are what make Swedenborg unique. They enabled him to develop, not a new science, but a unique attitude to science; and a philosophy which, while it was bound to fall short of success in that it sought to penetrate a realm that only Divine revelation could open, yet enabled him to arrive at genuine philosophical truths—truths which prepared his mind to become the instrument of a unique revelation of Divine truth.