

## EDITORIAL NOTES

We welcome a continuation of the series on the *Rational Psychology*, by Erik Sandstrom. This series I hope will stimulate further studies relating rational psychology to two areas: first, to continue investigations of rational psychology—as suggested in many places in the series by its author—into the larger area of New Church philosophy that depends upon the Writings; second, to initiate the relation of such results to the history of philosophy in general.

The writing of *Rational Psychology* (1742) was contemporary with the influence of the skeptical conclusions of Empiricism through Locke and Berkeley culminating in its extreme form in Hume (1711–1776; date of his *Treatise* 1738, *Enquiry* 1748).

Kant in his *Critique of Pure Reason* (1781) and *Prolegomena* (1783) as a result had to begin with knowledge almost where Socrates did as a result of the skepticism of the Sophists. Kant undertook the question, What is knowledge, and how is it possible? His method, using the logical (or as he called it the transcendental) approach, is in contrast to the psychological.

Although in the *Critique* this method led to a reestablishment of a belief in existents necessary for natural science, the scientific propriety of metaphysical questions remained challenged.

The empirical approach led to complete skepticism; the transcendental approach, although making natural science seem possible, still left questionable metaphysics that included considerations of God, moral life, etc. What out was there, then, for a believer such as Kant? Among other things he could recommend to the metaphysicians that

. . . they . . . carry on their business, not as a science, but as an art of wholesome oratory suited to the common sense of man. . . . They [can] . . . only . . . assume . . . the existence of something that is possible and even indispensable for the guidance of the understanding and of the will in life. (*Prolegomena*, Open Court edition, p. 29)

Nevertheless the history of rational psychology, begun in an explicit way in *De Anima* by Aristotle, had all but drawn to a close under Kant. The reflection on this is illustrated by a present-day summary of Kant's rational psychology as follows:

. . . we have no right to infer that this knower is a self-existent, simple, indecomposable self-identical soul-substance, one that remains the same in all change. In reasoning thus, rational psychology draws conclusions not warranted by the premises; it uses the terms self, subject and soul in different senses, and is guilty of a fallacy which Kant calls a paralogism. We cannot prove, theoretically, the existence of free will and an immortal soul. Still, although rational psychology does not add anything to our knowledge, it prevents us from adopting either a soulless materialism or a groundless spiritualism. Reason thus gives us a hint to turn from fruitless speculations and to put our self-knowledge to moral use. The moral law teaches man to esteem the mere consciousness of righteousness more than anything else in the world, and to render himself fit to become the citizen of a better world, which exists in his Idea only. (*A History of Philosophy*, Thilly-Wood, p. 431)

A history of rational psychology is demanded of New Church scholarship.

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One item in this issue has to do with an article in another journal on a work by Swedenborg. Dr. Hugo Lj. Odhner has prepared a review of an article in *Theoria* by Harald Morin on Swedenborg's *Intercourse of Soul and Body*. Dr. Odhner acknowledges thanks to Kurt Nemitz for the translation of the original article from German for his use.

As writer of the *Philosophical Notes* I am particularly thankful to Dr. Odhner for his emphasis in his review upon the question of dualism. I believe that plurality as opposed to monism has an important relation with symbols as treated in the present series in the notes.

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Another article from a journal (*Medical History*) is republished by permission in this issue of *NEW PHILOSOPHY*. The article is published without review comments as it appeared originally.

We have permission to publish a related article by T. H. Schwedenberg, M.D., from the *Archives of Neurology*. It will appear in a future issue.

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