

# THE NEW PHILOSOPHY

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VOL. LXIX

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No. 3

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## TRANSACTIONS

OF THE

SIXTY-NINTH ANNUAL MEETING

OF THE

SWEDENBORG SCIENTIFIC ASSOCIATION

The Sixty-ninth Annual Meeting of the Swedenborg Scientific Association was held at the Civic and Social Club, Bryn Athyn, Pennsylvania, on Sunday, May 8, 1966. The meeting was called to order at 8:10 p.m. by the President, Mr. Donald C. Fitzpatrick, Jr.

The minutes of the last Annual Meeting were adopted as printed in the NEW PHILOSOPHY of July-September, 1965.

The Chairman announced the appointment of Mr. Robert H. Johns and Mr. Edward J. Cranch as Judges of Election and of Mr. William R. Cooper as Committee on the Roll. Mr. Cooper reported later that 44 members and 36 guests were present.

The Chairman expressed pleasure in the change in time and place of the meeting, which was an effort to increase attendance and interest. He called on Mr. Edward F. Allen, head of the Nominating Committee, to take the chair.

Mr. Allen thanked Mrs. Fitzpatrick and the other wives of Board Members, who had served a delicious supper before the meeting at attractively decorated tables. He then explained that because the issue of NEW PHILOSOPHY containing the report of the Nominating Committee was late in coming out, it would be necessary to go back to our old procedure of accepting nominations from the floor. He presented the following slate:

*For President:* Mr. Donald C. Fitzpatrick, Jr.

*For Members of the Board of Directors:*

Mr. Lennart O. Alfelt

Dr. Hugo Lj. Odhner

Mr. E. Boyd Asplundh

Mr. Joel Pitcairn

Mr. Charles S. Cole

Mr. Kenneth Rose

Rev. W. Cairns Henderson

Mr. Tomas H. Spiers

Miss Morna Hyatt

Mr. Allen then called for nominations from the floor. There being none, the nominations were closed. It was moved, seconded, and passed unanimously that the secretary cast a ballot for the nominees, and they were declared elected.

Mr. Fitzpatrick resumed the chair. He gave a summary of several reports, and Mr. Allen gave the Editor's Report.

Mr. Fitzpatrick thanked Mr. Allen for his report and for the *NEW PHILOSOPHY*, saying that without Mr. Allen and his dedication we would not have the *NEW PHILOSOPHY*. This would be a loss to the Church and the world. The fact that there are few philosophical journals in the world indicates the low regard in which philosophy is held. The worth of the *NEW PHILOSOPHY* is not to be measured in pages nor in the number of members that it reaches.

The Chairman then introduced Rev. Ormond deC. Odhner, who delivered the annual address, entitled, "Two Sources of Truth—or Two Foundations?"

Mr. Fitzpatrick thanked the speaker and noted the remarkable evidence of the way Swedenborg's mind was prepared to be the instrument for the Revelation of the Second Coming. He was the first New Church philosopher and a model for all New Church philosophers in acknowledging the existence of one source of truth and two foundations.

Mr. Joel Pitcairn also expressed his thanks for the new and interesting ideas contained in the address. He quoted from *The Infinite* that it is not the part of the rational to investigate infinity. The function of science is to confirm or deny something already preconceived.

In response to a question from Mr. Charles S. Cole, Mr. Odhner said that it is essential to New Church education that teachers in secular subjects bring the doctrines into their teaching whenever the doctrines apply.

Mr. Edward F. Allen said that unless we open ourselves as receptacles, we cannot appreciate the truths in either foundation. In the history of philosophy each of the actors stands in some relation to his predecessors, to his contemporaries, and to those that follow. Swedenborg, however, does not fall into place along with the others and is a challenge to the teacher. The other philosophers follow one of two tracks, that of empiricism or of logical rationalism. "British empiricism" was introduced by Locke just before Swedenborg. Its leaders were Berkeley and Hume. Swedenborg wrote the *Rational Psychology* in 1742, between the publishing of Hume's two works. Hume's works represent what Bertrand Russell calls a dead end, the logical conclusion of empiricism. Hume denied matter and also spirit. Russell is not what most of us would consider a "believer" and yet he said that all philosophers since Hume have tried to avoid his skeptical conclusions. Russell could find nothing wrong with Hume's arguments, but said he could hope that someone could find a less skeptical system than that of Hume. The track of logical rationalism takes up after Swedenborg with Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*. It is difficult to orient Swedenborg with respect to either of these tracks. The basis of New Church philosophy is more than reading the *Rational Psychology* and the *Principia*. It involves reading the Writings themselves. The sciences open the understanding so far as man is in good. In New Church philosophy we have this pair—truth and good.

Mr. Johns referred to the mention of proof in the address. An understanding of the meaning of proof is important to an understanding of the relation of science and revealed truth. Proof is a mathematical term; science texts today do not mention the word. Science does not prove, and yet ministers continue to speak of science proving things.

Mr. Joel Pitcairn agreed with Mr. Johns that proof is a mathematical term, and yet even in mathematics and logic the question of what is meant by proof has brought about a crisis.

Dr. Hugo Lj. Odhner expressed surprise that *Spiritual Diary* number 5709 has been used to support the idea of two sources of truth. Nature is a source of information, but not without the human mind. People talk of truth as if it were facts. Facts are the form in which truth is passed on. Facts are suggestive of truth. Dr. Odhner noted the definition of truth as the form of

good, saying that other philosophers in the world, namely instrumentalists, seem to suggest the same thing. William James, who was influenced by his father and brother, who in turn were influenced by the Writings, held that truth is truth to him for whom it works; it is an instrument through which one does what *he* thinks is good. The Writings, on the other hand, do not say that truth is a form of *man's* good. In regard to proof, Dr. Odhner said that the main point of *The Infinite* was connected with what is now called existentialism, which means that existence is prior to essence. All of the Christian fathers have tried to prove a First Cause and so to demonstrate the existence of God. But the *essence* of God can be seen only through revelation. Essence is a concept prior to existence. Substance is necessary in order for there to be attributes.

Mr. Fitzpatrick said that Mr. Allen's remarks on the difficulty of placing Swedenborg in the direct line of the history of philosophy had led him to speculate on what the reception of the Writings would have been had they been considered as further philosophical works rather than as revelation. Some in the church believe that all we need is in the Writings. However, a New Church philosopher needs to witness the dialogue between Swedenborg and other philosophers. Mr. Allen in his philosophy course brings this dialogue to the students.

To the Chairman's invitation to make some final remarks, Mr. Odhner responded with thanks to those who had commented.

The meeting adjourned at 10:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

MORNA HYATT, *Secretary*

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#### OFFICERS OF THE ASSOCIATION

At a meeting of the Board of Directors following the annual meeting on May 8, 1966, the following officers were re-elected.

*Vice-President:* Mr. Charles S. Cole  
*Secretary:* Miss Morna Hyatt  
*Treasurer:* Mr. E. Boyd Asplundh  
*Editor:* Mr. Edward F. Allen

MORNA HYATT, *Secretary*

## TREASURER'S REPORT

for year ending April 30, 1966

BALANCE—May 1, 1965

\$8,039.15

*Plus Receipts 1965/66*

Dues .....	\$ 773.10
Subscription Fees .....	74.00
Contributions .....	1,201.00
Book Sales .....	296.94
Interest .....	287.58

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 \$2,632.62
*Less Expenditures 1965/66*

NEW PHILOSOPHY—3 issues	\$1,350.05
Office Expense .....	13.14
Book Purchases .....	150.83*

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 \$1,514.02

BALANCE—April 30, 1966

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 \$9,157.75

(Of this amount, approximately \$7,300 is deposited with the  
Huntingdon Valley Federal Savings & Loan Association.)

## BOOK SALES

Animal Kingdom. ....	6 sets	Ontology .....	12
Dock and Dam .....	7	The Senses .....	3
Economy of the AK ..	5 sets	Principia .....	2 sets
Fibre (now O.P.) ....	3	Psychologica .....	2
Generation .....	2	Rational Psychology ..	23
Mechanical Inventions .	25	Concordance .....	10
Prologue to Animal Kingdom .....			4
Psychological Transactions .....			2
Retardation of the Earth .....			1
Scientific & Philosophical Treatises Fascicles 1 and 2			14
Swedenborg as Geologist .....			7
Swedenborg as Anatomist .....			7
NEW PHILOSOPHY—back issues .....			17
Complete set 1945–1963 .....			1

\* 100 copies of *Ontology* in photo offset reprint.

## REPORT OF THE EDITOR

The **NEW PHILOSOPHY** continues with the number of pages per issue approximately the same as that for past years.

The page proofs for the first number in 1966 are at the printer. It was hoped that this number would have been in your hands before this date. The copy for the second number is ready for the printer. Sufficient material is on hand for the balance of the year, although some of it requires considerable editorial work.

Three writers, who so far as I know have never appeared in our pages before, will have articles in the **NEW PHILOSOPHY** by the end of the year. Two of these articles are at hand.

As in the last few years I want to express my thanks to the Secretary, Miss Morna Hyatt, and to the Editorial Board, Lennart O. Alfelt, Donald C. Fitzpatrick, and Kenneth Rose for carrying all the technical work of seeing copy through the press. This is a team that does its work in what time its members can find on week ends as a secondary priority to their regular jobs. It is an example of something the worth of which we hear very little about today—and that is dedication.

The contributors to the **NEW PHILOSOPHY** and its Editorial Board work in an environment that challenges them to take on their own a broader view of their use than is encouraged by that environment.

The huge effect in academic life of the dollar sign—through, for example, such things as the National Science Foundation and the extended tactics to have all academic services in colleges and universities measured in financial worth—creates a special problem in our environment that seems to be getting worse daily.

A young man who not so long ago has begun his work for the Church came to see me the other day. He said, "You know, I have been reading about important things that have been done in the past. For the most part their accomplishment required dedication." He said further, "I wonder if my generation has the kind of dedication that is required. I wonder if I have the kind of dedication that is necessary."

Another challenge to us is the attitude of *intelligentsia* within the Church as well as without with respect to philosophy. In listening to spoken expressions about philosophy one almost suspects at

times that these people believe that philosophy is something that is less than intellectually respectable.

I do not understand how any serious student of the history of thought in any field whatsoever can harbor such a negative opinion. Yet I also sometimes wonder, where indeed are these serious students?

Science is presumed to be the important respectable discipline today, and people in other disciplines, forgetting *their* distinctiveness, sometimes clamor for a vicarious dignity by referring to their own work as "scientific."

Charles Darwin, who without question is one of those responsible for what passes as "modern science," has been quoted as saying, ". . . all observation must be for or against some view, if it is to be of any service." Even if it can be assumed that by "observation" Darwin here meant the results of the empirical method, we have yet to know what he meant by "view" and what he meant by "service."

If he meant by each of these only their utter naturalistic implications then his philosophy consists only in the judgment that no other implications have meaning. But if by empiricism he had a broader view than merely formal observations, as has been the case in traditional philosophy, and if by "view" he meant a "faith" and if by "service" a "manifestation of use," then to say, ". . . all observation must be for or against some view, if it is to be of any service," is to acknowledge to science—and even to knowledge, whatever its source—a broader and more significant meaning than the naturalistic and monistic implications.

The NEW PHILOSOPHY is an instrument to make known the research work of dedicated people who still have a faith that there is more to the world, there is more to people, than what appears only to the sensual perceptions.

EDWARD F. ALLEN

## CHAPTER REPORTS

## GLENVIEW

Last summer when Rev. Kurt Nemitz moved from Glenview and took up his more advanced duties, Rev. Alfred Acton II assumed the leadership of our chapter, meeting every Thursday instead of three Thursdays a month.

During the summer of 1966 we finished our study of Swedenborg's *Rational Psychology* and in the fall started reading "Principles of the New Philosophy" by Dr. Hugo Lj. Odhner.

This study has been most interesting and useful particularly because Rev. Acton reads almost all of the numbers from the Writings referred to in the footnotes. He has a set of the Writings in loose leaf which allows him to bring all of the needed numbers each evening in a folder rather than lugging an arm load of books.

While we move from one home to another we seem to wind up at the Victor Gladish's most of the time.

HUBERT S. NELSON

## TORONTO

Since October, 1965, the New Philosophy Group in Toronto (formerly the Philosophy Reading Group, which has been inactive in recent years) has met monthly at the homes of its members under the direction of the undersigned. Attendance has frequently been hampered by illness and inclement weather, but has averaged about ten. Actually we are not a chapter of the Swedenborg Scientific Association, nor affiliated with the journal the NEW PHILOSOPHY, but render a courtesy report as a group interested in the philosophical principles and modes of thought implied in the Divine teachings given in the Theological Writings of Emanuel Swedenborg.

We have chosen this year to read Dr. Hugo Lj. Odhner's comprehensive summary, "The Principles of the New Philosophy," as published last summer in the NEW PHILOSOPHY. Looking up some of the references offered by Dr. Odhner often involves us in long but interesting discussions on numerous topics, including *conatus*, the nature of the spiritual world and of the spiritual sun,

the origin of evil uses on earth, the nature and application of discrete degrees and influx, the purest things of nature, the *limbus* and consciousness. Occasionally in reflecting the interests of the group we digress to more down-to-earth questions, such as practical forgiveness of sin in others and what children should be taught about the nature of the Divine. To allow for such meandering: (in which nearly everyone contributes significantly) our reading of "The Principles of the New Philosophy" has been rather unhurried. We do expect to finish it at our final meeting of the season, a planned supper.

DANIEL GOODENOUGH, JR.

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### REPORT OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Since the last annual meeting, the Board of Directors has held four meetings: on May 12 and October 19, 1965, and on March 15 and May 8, 1966.

At the meeting of May 12, 1965, the following officers were elected:

<i>Vice-President:</i>	Mr. Charles S. Cole
<i>Secretary:</i>	Miss Morna Hyatt
<i>Treasurer:</i>	Mr. E. Boyd Asplundh
<i>Editor:</i>	Mr. Edward F. Allen

At other meetings the following topics were considered:

Material for the NEW PHILOSOPHY.

Translating.

Indexing the NEW PHILOSOPHY.

The Annual Meeting.

Inventorying our stock.

Reprinting *Tremulation*, *The Fibre*, and *A Philosopher's Notebook*

It was decided that hereafter Swedenborg Scientific Association publications shall be sold through the General Church Book Center rather than through the treasurer of the Association.

Respectfully submitted,

MORNA HYATT, *Secretary*