

# THE NEW PHILOSOPHY

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No. 3

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## TRANSACTIONS OF THE SEVENTY-FOURTH ANNUAL MEETING OF THE SWEDENBORG SCIENTIFIC ASSOCIATION

The Seventy-Fourth Annual Meeting of the Swedenborg Scientific Association was held in the auditorium of Pendleton Hall, Bryn Athyn, Pennsylvania, on Wednesday evening, May 5, 1971. The meeting was called to order at 8:15 p.m. by the President, Mr. Donald C. Fitzpatrick, Jr.

The minutes of the Seventy-Third Annual Meeting were accepted as printed in the July-September, 1970, issue of the *NEW PHILOSOPHY*.

The report of the Nominating Committee was read by Miss Morna Hyatt:

We have received by mail a nomination for Professor Edward F. Allen, but we understand that he does not wish to undertake the presidency at this time. We also understand that Doctor Hugo Lj. Odhner does not wish to run again for a place on the Board of Directors.

According to the By-Laws of the Association, "At each Annual Meeting . . . the members shall elect from their number a president and nine directors to serve for one year or until their successors are elected. The president shall be ex officio a member of the Board of Directors. . . . The officers of this corporation shall be a president, a vice president, a secretary, and a treasurer. All (except the president) shall be elected by the directors at a meeting held immediately after the Annual Meeting of the Corporation." Note that the officers other than the president need not be members of the Board. Of recent years, neither the secretary nor treasurer has been a member of the Board. At this meeting, we are to elect a president and nine other members of the Board. Following this meeting the new Board will hold a meeting to elect the remaining officers.

The Nominating Committee presents the following slate:

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

*For Members of the Board of Directors:* Eight incumbents:

Rt. Rev. Elmo C. Acton	Charles S. Cole, Jr.
Lennart O. Alfelt	Rev. W. Cairns Henderson
Edward F. Allen	Joel Pitcairn
Erland J. Brock	Tomas H. Spiers
Plus:	Rev. Daniel W. Goodenough

There being no further nominations, the proposed slate was declared elected.

President Fitzpatrick then read the following remarks on Doctor Odhner's retirement from the Board of Directors:

Members of the Association will undoubtedly have noted the absence of the name of Dr. Hugo L. Odhner from the report of the Nominating Committee this evening. Dr. Odhner requested earlier this Spring that his name not be placed in nomination at this meeting.

This action marks the end of a long and fruitful period of service to the Association on Dr. Odhner's part. His name and the quality of his thought have become well-known to many through the pages of the *NEW PHILOSOPHY*, and his affection for the uses of the Association and for those who are engaged in those uses is well-known by all who have been privileged to serve with him on the Board of Directors.

Unable to be here this evening because of his health, Dr. Odhner sent word yesterday with Mr. Alfelt expressing his thanks for the kindness and concern which members of the Board and the Association have shown for him.

As chairman, I would communicate to you the Board's nomination of Dr. Odhner as an Honorary Member of the Board of Directors, and would entertain a motion requesting that the Secretary send greetings and best wishes to Dr. Odhner from this meeting.

The motion was passed with applause, and Dr. Odhner was unanimously elected.

The Treasurer's report, previously distributed, was accepted.

The report of the Board of Directors was read by the Secretary, and accepted.

Mr. Alfelt read his report as Editor, introducing it with a tribute to the previous Editor, Professor Edward F. Allen.

The report of the Glenview Philosophy Group was read by the Secretary. Mr. Fitzpatrick noted that groups in other centers of the Church are carrying on discussions, an encouraging sign.

Mr. Kenneth Rose, Committee on the Roll, reported 49 members and 54 guests present.

Mr. Fitzpatrick then introduced the speaker, Rev. Alfred Acton II, who delivered his address entitled "Evil and Early Man."

Mr. Fitzpatrick thanked Mr. Acton for the fascinating look back through thousands of years and for its treatment of the timely subject, what is evil. Today some say that evil is relative, that it is non-real, that it does not exist. The paper opens up a whole range of possibilities with a concept of the fall of the Most Ancient Church involving the choice of a pre-Adamitic animal-like existence. It gives a glimpse of the landscape in which early man lived, a landscape hitherto in shadow. Mr. Fitzpatrick cited another instance indicating an early response above the plane of the animal, a skeleton found in Iran buried with flowers. He regarded Mr. Acton's paper as a remarkable example of the bringing together of the teachings of revelation and the findings of natural science. Recently developed methods in anthropology give increasing assurance to our views of early man.

Professor Richard Gladish pointed out that this had been a great week for anthropology in Bryn Athyn since it included not only Mr. Acton's paper but a visit and lectures in the Academy College from Dr. James Brain, supported by a National Science Foundation grant. Dr. Brain had said that recent findings show that the first men had flat teeth indicating that they were grain eaters, not meat eaters. This is a remarkable confirmation of what the Writings say about the first men.

Reverend Norbert H. Rogers said he appreciated the fact that the paper gave a possible answer to a problem that has bothered him, how evil animals could exist before man became evil.

Bishop George de Charms had found a great deal to interest him in the paper. Many of its suggestions followed the line of his own thought. He particularly welcomed what Mr. Acton had said about evil animals, but he had envisioned the Most Ancient Church much earlier and lasting much longer. He believes that the development of the race has been slow and gradual. He asked whether Mr. Acton considered that the preadamites were human beings from the beginning and whether they had a human soul from the beginning. Bishop De Charms has considered them as potential human beings with a human soul. If this is the case, then what about Mr. Acton's reference to the celestial soul being implanted?

Mr. Warren David asked whether Mr. Acton had given thought to the existence of evil on other planets and whether this might

have preceded and influenced the development of evil on our earth.

Professor Wilfred Howard said that the Writings speak of two sources of influx—good and evil—providing for man's freedom. Evil inflows, but we can repel it. Since there was no hell to inflow in the beginning, how did men turn to evil?

Reverend Daniel W. Goodenough also had found the paper most interesting, particularly the section on how order was gradually introduced into the natural world. *Divine Love and Wisdom* says that there is influx from the spiritual world according as the form in the natural world corresponds. The paper, in making the preadamite not quite a man, had answered some questions, but Mr. Goodenough had difficulty in reconciling the idea of a preadamite not fully human and yet living to eternity. How would this be possible if he could not look above himself? Mr. Goodenough shared Bishop De Charms' question about the dates of the Most Ancient Church. The similarity in religious myths around the world can be explained by the Indian migration across the Bering Strait, which is believed to have occurred sometime before 10,000 B.C. The myths would have been derived from the Ancient Church, which Mr. Acton's theory would put considerably later. Cave drawings date from 25,000 B.C. Are these a form of writing? If the preadamite was not a man and had no freedom, then knowledge of God came with the beginning of the Most Ancient Church. Could not evil choice come at the beginning of the Church, then, rather than only at the end?

Mr. Ragnar Boyesen noted that freedom is from the capacity to be led by God. The preadamite was in the dense falsity of the senses. Was his fall from evil or from falsity, from perversion of the concept of good or of truth?

Professor Charles S. Cole asked whether an answer to some of the problems could lie in the distinction between evil as disorder and evil as sin. He invited Mr. Acton to return to the Academy for a few days to talk with students about the ideas in his paper. He noted that doubts have arisen about the precision of dating methods and referred to important work done by the Creation Research Society, a society which requires belief in Christ, in the Old and New Testament, and a scientific background.

Reverend William Woofenden said the paper had stirred up some old questions he had tried to bury. In recent years he has

been grateful for the statement in the Writings that man cannot think about the concept "from eternity." He has assumed that he cannot think of the origin of evil. He recognizes the existence of evil but cannot imagine a time before evil. He no longer laughs at the pre-Socratic idea of time as a circle.

Mr. Prescott Rogers, a teacher of Ancient History at the Academy, said that he would have to re-evaluate his lectures in the light of Mr. Acton's ideas. He had difficulty with the chronology. He believes that food gathering and food producing societies could exist simultaneously, and he would push the date for the Most Ancient Church further back.

Miss Lyris Hyatt asked where Homer comes into the chronology.

Mr. Acton responded to the discussion with appreciation for the comments and questions. He was not concerned in this paper with the beginning of the Most Ancient Church but rather with its fall. The fall occurred with the development of writing. He would be happy to place the Most Ancient Church earlier if we had evidence of pastoral life. He does not think that millions of years of preadamites makes sense. As to the celestial soul, he referred to *Arcana Coelestia* 310 and drew an analogy to a baby, who has the natural degree open and the higher degrees in potency. He said he had thought of evil on other planets and referred to *Last Judgement* 10. There is no teaching that the Most Ancient Church ever got to its highest point and then declined. It was probably on its way up when man first embraced evil. It is pretty clear that the choice of evil was a perversion of good rather than of truth. The first man's choice of evil was a sin, whereas the embracing of evil by men of a later generation may or may not have been a sin. Mr. Acton said that Homer lived in the time of the Ancient Church.

The meeting adjourned at 10 p.m., after which many of those present accepted the invitation of Mr. Acton's mother, Mrs. Kesniel Acton, to a social gathering at her home, in which pleasant surroundings discussion continued on questions that had been raised in the paper.

Respectfully submitted,

MORNA HYATT, *Secretary*

## OFFICERS OF THE ASSOCIATION

At a meeting of the Board of Directors following the annual meeting on May 5, 1971, the following officers were re-elected.

*Vice President:* Mr. Charles S. Cole, Jr.  
*Secretary:* Miss Morna Hyatt  
*Treasurer:* Mr. E. Boyd Asplundh

MORNA HYATT, *Secretary*

## REPORT OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Since the last Annual Meeting, the Board of Directors has held four meetings: on May 6 and October 13, 1970, and on March 9 and May 5, 1971.

At the meeting of May 6, 1970, the following officers were elected:

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

At other meetings the following topics were discussed: Material for the NEW PHILOSOPHY, binding the *Economy* and *Psychological Transactions*, reproducing the *Journal of Dreams*, reprints from the NEW PHILOSOPHY, speaker and arrangements for the Annual Meeting, promotion and support of research projects by young adults in the New Church, and other business.

The Board discussed a request that the Annual Meeting be held on a weekend for the sake of members from out of town. Since May weekends are crowded, a change in the By-Laws to permit the meeting to be held in some other month might be an advantage. The Board would welcome comment on this matter.

At the meeting of March 9, 1971, Professor Allen resigned as Editor of the NEW PHILOSOPHY because of the need for him to devote his time to developing philosophy courses for the Academy College. Mr. Lennart O. Alfelt was unanimously elected Editor.

In addition to the business mentioned above, stimulating discussions were carried on concerning the place of Swedenborg's philosophy in the history of thought and the need of recognizing

the background for Swedenborg's ideas while acknowledging that Providence was preparing him to be a revelator. Professor Allen believes that the New Church has arrived at a place where we need to have a dialogue with the world as well as an affirmative attitude toward the Writings. We need to find the answers to questions young people are asking. We need people who can go outside their own specialized fields in order to do this. We need to understand at least one philosophy in addition to New Church philosophy in order to carry on this dialogue. If we do not show what the New Church has to say on philosophical questions of the day, our children are going to fall under the influence of atheists.

### TREASURER'S REPORT

for year ending April 30, 1971

BALANCE April 30, 1970            \$10,620.94

*Plus Receipts 1970/71*

Dues.....	\$ 524.62
Subscription Fees.....	90.00
Contributions.....	731.00
Book Sales.....	1,271.57
Dividends.....	1,361.98
Interest.....	405.31
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	4,384.48

*Less Expenses 1970/71*

NEW PHILOSOPHY (4 issues).....	\$2,112.00
Editorial Expense.....	2,500.00*
Misc. Office Expense.....	282.40
Printing Books.....	2,887.92
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	7,782.32

BALANCE April 30, 1971            \$7,223.10

The Association also holds 2 shares Pitcairn Company common stock and 534 shares Gulf Oil Corporation common stock.

\* Nakagawa salary.

## BOOK SALES

Animal Kingdom.....	4 Sets
Dock & Dam.....	1
Economy of the Animal Kingdom.....	4 Sets
Fibre.....	3
Generation.....	3
Letters & Memorials.....	2 Sets
Letters & Memorials, Vol. I only.....	1
Mechanical Inventions.....	4
Philosophers Notebook.....	6
Psychologica.....	5
Rational Psychology & Concordance.....	6 Sets
Rational Psychology.....	25
Retardation of the Earth.....	2
De Sale Communi.....	1
Selected Sentences.....	1
Scientific & Philosophical Treatises.....	1
Senses.....	3
Human Mind.....	376
Principles of the New Philosophy.....	2
NEW PHILOSOPHY Back Issues.....	22
Complete set.....	1

## NEW PHILOSOPHY CIRCULATION

356 Total (216 to members and 75 to paying subscribers. There were 65 library and exchange copies which were sent free of charge).

## EDITOR'S REPORT

Mr. President, members and friends of the Association:

Before I read the Editor's report I would like to say a few words and read a statement of appreciation.

Please, if you will, imagine that there is no time. Then the sequence of what I am going to relate will not bother you at all, while, in all probability, it will provide a thrilling piece of research for a future historian, gleaning in the papers of the Association and on the pages of the *NEW PHILOSOPHY*.

In March of this year a change took place, duly recorded in the Minutes of the Board of Directors, about which a statement will be read here today for the first time, and I presume, duly recorded in the Transactions. Our future historian, however, will read the same statement already in the October-December 1970 issue of the *NEW PHILOSOPHY*, thus chronologically before the change actually took place or anyone knew about it. If this puzzles you, a clue to the solution may be found in the first parts of the "Report of the Editor" to be read a little later tonight.

Though we may successfully have eliminated time it may be more difficult to become unaware of the restrictions of space. For the object of the statement, Edward F. Allen, is not here today, but in far-away Greece together with his wife. Though we miss their presence here, we certainly would not wish to take them away from the sights of Athens, Olympus, Delphi and other places so intimately connected with myth and philosophy.

[See the October-December, 1970, issue of the *NEW PHILOSOPHY*, p. 394, for statement of appreciation read at this point.]

### Report of the Editor

The phrase "the publication of the NEW PHILOSOPHY continues behind schedule" and its practical implications are familiar to those of you who have followed the Editor's reports over the past years, or with some anticipation looked into your mailboxes. Regretfully, it is obvious that the statement must be repeated once more here: The publication of the NEW PHILOSOPHY continues behind schedule. However, there seems at the time of the writing of this report to be some realistic hope that we may within the span of a few months be able to narrow the gap between the date printed on an issue and the date when it is actually published and, hopefully, to eliminate the gap entirely at the end of this year.

The copy for the next issue to be published, which is the Oct.-Dec. 1970 issue will be sent to the printer in a few days. Material for the two following issues is in hand but requires rather much editorial work in places before it can be sent to press. The fourth issue will contain the transactions of the Annual Meeting and the Annual Address, and, finally, some material for the last number of this year has been promised.

The schedule outlined above will require increased effort from the editorial staff and I am therefore happy to be able to announce that Messrs. Donald C. Fitzpatrick, Jr. and Kenneth Rose have consented to continue on the Editorial Board. Their experienced counsel and help will, as in the past, greatly contribute to the fulfillment of the purpose of the journal.

There is at present no intention of changing the general editorial policies of the NEW PHILOSOPHY. However, efforts on a more systematic basis are being made to secure a sufficient flow of contributions for future issues. I have recently contacted a number of prospective contributors and the first sweep was very satisfying. It produced some of the material which has made possible my optimistic report above on closing the publishing gap.

Though the outlook for a regular publication of the NEW PHILOSOPHY seems rather bright so far as the immediate future is concerned, it has become obvious that there is a need for a widening of the circle from which contributions can be sought.

In recent decades the majority of articles have come from very few writers, all directly connected with the Academy of the New Church. Academy graduates, active in professional fields outside the Academy have so far contributed very little. Yet I believe that among them we have a great potential for viewpoints of a stimulating kind, possible only in an environment where variant philosophies and practices pose a challenge to our own philosophy.

Furthermore, the Association, being independent of any specific New Church group, consists of members from the several New Church organizations as well as others who are interested in promoting the aims of the Association. For reasons not necessary to relate here the majority of the Association's membership comes from groups connected with the Academy. I am confident that the Academy people will continue to give their strong support to the purposes of the Association. But I feel equally sure that it would be of mutual benefit if the contact between the Association and other, not-so-well-represented New Church groups could be strengthened. Material from these sources has in the past always been useful in stimulating thought and broadening the scope.

I will therefore make a special effort in trying to interest scholars from these New Church groups to share to a larger extent than hitherto the fruits of their studies with the readers of the NEW PHILOSOPHY. But I would also like to encourage *all* members of the Association as Edward F. Allen did to share their reflections with others through the pages of the journal.

Though my immediate hope is that this effort will lead to a sufficient flow of publishable material, I also believe that such a flow could mean more than just filling four issues a year of the journal. It could mean a revitalizing of the study and a deeper understanding among us all of the philosophy and science in Swedenborg's works.

LENNART O. ALFELT