

PHILOSOPHICAL NOTES

ON CORRESPONDENCES

326 *Philosophical Doctrines as An Introduction to Rational Psychology.* Chapter VIII of Part I of *The Economy of the Animal Kingdom* is its concluding chapter. Early in Part I there is a promise that the Doctrine of Series and Degrees or of Order will be given in Chapter VIII:

That all other things in the mundane system, and its threefold kingdom, distinguish themselves into similar degrees and orders, the reader will see confirmed in the course of the ensuing chapters, particularly in Chapter VIII of the present Part, in which I have entered upon an explanation of the Philosophy of Degrees. [1 Econ. 67]

In an earlier set of notes we discussed the doctrine of degrees as it is treated of in that chapter (THE NEW PHILOSOPHY, April 1975). It was suggested in those notes that beyond that doctrine this chapter contains a promise toward the philosophical doctrines in general. The doctrine of correspondence is beginning to unfold as the chapter nears its conclusions. It is to this doctrine that this set of notes is directed.

A result in philosophy often gives rise to new questions and perhaps new promises. That is the way it is with the doctrine of degrees. The doctrine of degrees was a new doctrine, and as a new doctrine it required language proper to it. The new language in this case gives a special meaning to the term *correspondence*. When a correspondence is described as a relation between two realities, one in one degree and the other in a higher or lower degree, these realities are referred to as *correspondents*.

The title of the chapter, "An Introduction to Rational Psychology," testifies that a search has begun that goes beyond the doctrine of degrees. It is important to understand that there is a promise of something to come *in philosophy*.

327 *From Degrees to Correspondents.* Once the notion of discrete degrees is acknowledged, there is a need to relate *things* of one degree to *things* of another. The term *relation* itself is ambiguous as it has a variety of meanings. If *a* is a reality in one degree and *A* is a reality in another degree it might be said that "*a* is the analogue of *A*," or that it is "*a* parallel with *A*,"

or "it is that which in one degree answers to a certain thing in a different degree," etc.

Each of these phrases seems to select only some aspect of things. What is demanded is a word which intends a relation between total or whole beings or things. The expression "a corresponds to A" seems to fulfill the demand for proper language more completely than the above phrases. Because "a corresponds to A" seems such a natural way of expressing this relationship, one may suppose that initially Swedenborg used it as a *word* of common speech rather than as a special *term* applied to discrete degrees.

Of course it must be admitted that *corresponds* also has a variety of meanings. *Corresponds* is a well-known term in mathematics, as in the expressions "one-to-one correspondence." It may be applied in comparative anatomy. An example is that a substantial part of what one normally regards as the "leg" of a horse corresponds to only a part of the "foot" of a human being. But these usages are not the same as when "corresponds" is used to relate a thing in one degree to a thing in another. In the development of this idea Swedenborg observed that there are certain special demands upon the usage of "corresponds" when applied in this way.

In order then to ascertain and to know what that is in a superior degree which corresponds to its proper inferior, rules must be discovered to guide us in pointing it out, which we are enabled to do under any of the following circumstances. [1 Econ. 648]

The introductory nature of Swedenborg's searching is evident in the phrase "rules must be discovered to guide us." This supports the view expressed earlier that this chapter, as "An Introduction . . .", is a searching or a looking to the future, that is, a promise to continue the search. This differs from "Introduction" as the title of a kind of chapter that is bound in the beginning of a volume. Such a chapter may be written after the book itself is finished. We must take Swedenborg at his word here as to the intention involved, "rules must be discovered to guide us." It is an expressed demand upon his work as a philosopher.

328 *Circumstances Which Require "rules for guidance."* Five circumstances which require rules for guidance are listed in 1 Econ. 648. They are,

1. In case in the several things, which are beneath any given one, and not only in the one proximately beneath, but in all which follow, it be found to be the common and universal reigning principle.

2. In case it be so distinct from the superior that it subsists by itself; or is able not only to subsist together with the other, but separately by itself without it.

3. In case it be unknown whether it be its superior correspondent, except by way of analogy and eminence; and we are ignorant of its quality except by reflection, or by the knowledge of inferior things, as in a mirror.

4. Hence in case it has to be marked by an entirely different name.

5. In case there be a connection between the two, otherwise the superior and inferior entity of that series would have no dependence on each other, or mutual relation.

This enumeration of "circumstances," as Swedenborg calls them, is presented here in order to emphasize that in the development of the doctrine of correspondences the searching is directed first toward *correspondents* rather than to the relation called *correspondence*. The doctrine of series and degrees, or of order, presents this need. Unless the doctrine of degrees is acknowledged, together with its actualities or realities in each discrete degree, correspondence has nothing to which to refer. In the search for language leading to the doctrine of correspondences Swedenborg first refers simply to "things" (see 1. above), then to what may be called an *existent* or *substance* as implied in the phrase "subsists by itself" (see 2.), then to the naming of the thing as a "correspondent" (see 3.), the explicit recognition of the name or substantive as distinct from the verb (e.g. to correspond) (see 4.), and finally the expression "entity" appears as if to emphasize the thing that is the ontological aspect, again as distinct from the relation or the verb "to correspond." (see 5.)

Emphasis on *correspondent* as a noun is important in understanding the doctrine of correspondences, which by its title places emphasis on the naming of the relation rather than upon the Whatness of things related. As a doctrine in the philosophical works it is limited in application to things or existents which are known to science or which are supposed to exist. (An example of the latter is that of the bloods other than the red blood in *The Economy*.) Further or extended application of the doctrine to realities beyond nature is possible only when such correspondents are revealed.

329 *From Correspondents to Correspondences.* It has been observed how in speaking of discrete degrees a new language is required. In the next number (1 Econ. 649) thirteen examples of discrete degrees are given. In eleven of them, the verb *corresponds* appears. For example, in 1, "the *red blood* is a substance of an inferior degree: to this, in a superior degree corresponds the purer blood. . . ." In example 2, "an *artery* is a vessel of an inferior degree: to which, in a superior degree, corresponds a vessel of the purer blood. . . ." In example 3, "a *muscle* is that to which corresponds in a superior degree the motive fleshy fibre. . . ." etc. The appearances of "corresponds" in eleven out of thirteen examples gives evidence of the natural way in which this word appears in referring to discrete degrees. It is so natural that one might wonder why it is important to call attention to it. The justification is in this, that whether it happens naturally or not the doctrine of correspondence, when developed, becomes essential in speaking of degrees, and applied in this way is new, however old is the word correspondence itself. It may be that because of this natural way in which *correspondence* comes into common usage that the following remark is made about correspondence in the Writings:

It is said that heretofore there has been no knowledge of what the spiritual is, or of what its correspondence with the natural is, and therefore what correspondence is; yet these things might have been known. [DLW 374]

330 *Further Examples of Correspondences in Swedenborg's Philosophical Works.* The use of correspondences is illustrated far beyond what results only from anatomical studies by many examples in two small works published in the *Psychological Transactions*, for instance:

As long as motion endures so long does conatus endure; for conatus is the motive force of nature. But conatus alone is a dead force. As long as action continues so long does will continue; for will is the human mind's conatus to action. From will alone no action follows.

The divine operation is as perpetual as His providence; for providence is the Divine will to operate. But from providence alone no operation follows. [Example 1 of 21. *Hieroglyphic Key*]

Most of the examples in the *Hieroglyphic Key* have three parts, each of which refers to a correspondent in the world, in man, and in what is Divine respectively. In the example given, motion

is of the world, action is of man, Divine operation is the third part and is of God. Thus there is correspondence from what is of the world to what is human and thence to what is Divine. Within each of the parts there is also correspondence. For in the world there is motion and conatus. Some examples do not have three parts. Such is the case in Example V, where there is no correspondent in the Divine to relate to a force of nature that brings about rest or to sluggishness and indifference in man.

In the work called *Correspondences and Representations* almost all examples are from the Old and New Testaments and are divided according to several varieties. Under "Harmonic Correspondence" is

God saw that they were *good* (Gen. i, 4, 10, 12, 18, 21, 25), that is, were *perfect* or *well perfected*; for He had foreseen that they would be good, nor could it be otherwise, because it is God who created and made them, and from Him there is nothing but what is good. [Psych. Trans. p. 218]

The first "Paraboliical Correspondence" is "That the godly are like a tree, but the ungodly like chaff, etc. (Ps. i, 3, 4)." (p. 227).

The Biblical examples of correspondences in *Correspondences and Representations* are fragmentary and sometimes introduce us also to representations. What is now taking place in the mind of Swedenborg enters religion, that is, goes beyond philosophy. Yet what has taken place in his philosophical development will affect all future writing by him.

An article, "Swedenborg's Doctrine of Correspondence," by Alfred Acton I, *THE NEW PHILOSOPHY* 1917, probably prepared by him while translating the *Psychological Transactions* together with his Preface to that work, is recommended for an account of the two works referred to above.

As an appendix to the *Psychological Transactions* (pp. 195-204), Acton has also added a list of references, "Correspondences Taken from other of Swedenborg's Philosophical Writings."

331 *From "Corresponds" in the Natural Degree to Extensions into the Spiritual and the Divine.* In the philosophical works, correspondents were natural, as they appeared to Swedenborg. But during Swedenborg's philosophical period there was also a reaching out toward the application of correspondences to the Bible.

Applications of the doctrine of correspondences extend to things spiritual and Divine in the Writings when spiritual and Divine correspondents are revealed. For example in *Divine Love and Wisdom* the heart and lungs, that is, what is natural, correspond to the will and understanding, that is, to what is spiritual. DLW 377 is a kind of index number of many correspondences between parts of the human body and what is spiritual.

Extended applications appear in a variety of ways: for example in "correspondences . . . in the Word" (AC 3472–3485); in correspondences of the human body with the Grand Man of heaven (many sections in the *Arcana*, e.g. 3486–3489, and refer to Tables of Contents in Vols. IV–V); and even beyond this, in correspondences to what is Divine:

The heavenly Kingdom presents the form of one man, for the reason that all the things therein correspond to the Only Lord—that is his Divine Human—who alone is Man. [AC 3741]

Series of correspondences exist between things beginning in the world, where the only correspondents available are in space and time, and things on higher degrees:

1. In the lowest series are the examples which led Swedenborg to the doctrine of degrees and thence of correspondences.
2. On a higher level are examples of things of the body which have correspondents in the spiritual in man.
3. On a still higher level are the numerous correspondences between the human body and heaven.
4. On the highest level are correspondences of what is in heaven with what is of the Divine Human.

E. F. A.