

active solar area in an unoccupied expanse of the Primal Ether; and at once, through the proper activity of that central solar area "as father" and the substance and elastic reactivity of the surrounding Primal Ether as "mother," is fast framing the substances and parts of a new solar system; and that the first-shaped masses of the primeval planetary congeries are even now there flying toward their goals in the circling sphere, bye and bye to be moulded into earths whereon will rise the homes of a human race, new-born there from the Lord; glad to be created; and furnishing new brothers for the labors and the loves of heaven.

LILLIAN BEEKMAN.

## NOTE AND COMMENT.

### THE SWEDENBORG SCIENTIFIC ASSOCIATION.

#### ANNUAL MEETING.

The Fifth Annual Meeting of the Swedenborg Scientific Association will be held in the College Building of the Academy of the New Church, Bryn Athyn, near Philadelphia, Pa., on Wednesday and Thursday, May 28th and 29th, 1902. All reports and communications for the meeting should be sent to the undersigned before May 10th.

By order of the President,

EUGENE J. E. SCHRECK,  
*Secretary.*

4219 Ellis Ave., Chicago, Ill.

The Program of the meeting of the Swedenborg Scientific Association is given on page 100.

*Swedenborg and Modern Idealism; a Retrospect of Philosophy from Kant to the Present Time*, by Frank Sewall, M. A., has appeared, after long announcement, from the press of J. Speirs, London. It is a book of 244 pages, and embraces, besides some essays which have already appeared in *New-Church* and other Reviews, an introductory essay on the

relation of philosophy or of rational thought to theology, and a definition of Idealism in distinction from Materialism and also from a "misconceived Transcendentalism." The author uses "Idealism in its broadest sense, meaning thereby the opposite of Materialism." The motive in calling "Idealism simply the opposite of Materialism was to differentiate between Idealism and the truths of Revelation, or those which we regard as embraced in spiritual Faith." In defining Idealism more precisely he says, "it means belief in a self-active principle, which as Will and Idea is the object of a most immediate and absolute knowing in ourselves, and which is the only efficient cause of the activities and changes we see in the objective world." In subsequent chapters, after a lengthy treatment of "Swedenborg's relation to Aristotle," and of "Descartes and Leibnitz as reflected in Swedenborg," Kant's whole doctrine of cognition is closely compared with Swedenborg's doctrine of the Rational Faculty and of the Two Worlds, the Sensible and the Intellectual, and many coincidences are pointed out. "Progressive Phases of Idealism from Kant to Lotze" embrace notices of Jacobi, Schelling, Fichte, Hegel, Schleiermacher, and Schopenhauer, and a convergence is shown towards Swedenborg's doctrine of Discrete Degrees and of the World as Love, a statement of Swedenborg's doctrine of this distinctive philosophic concept being quoted from Prof. Lewis F. Hite, A. M., of Cambridge. Recent works of Professors Royce, James and Ladd, of this country, and of Dr. James Ward, of Cambridge, England; Renouvier, of France, and other European philosophers, are quoted in illustration of the approach in contemporary philosophic thought to Swedenborg's doctrine of the creation of the universe by discrete degrees out of love with a view to an immortal redeemed society of souls. The work also embraces Essays on "Philosophy as affected by Nationality" and on "John Addington Symonds," republished from the "New World" quarterly review.

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The habitability of other worlds than ours is discussed in a most engaging and yet thoroughly scientific manner by Garrett P. Serviss in *Other Worlds; Their Nature, Possibilities and Habitability in the light of the latest discoveries*," D. Appleton & Company, publishers, New York, 1901. To those who are interested in modern scientific corroborations of Swedenborg's distinct teaching of the habitability of the "earth in the Universe" this book will especially appeal. While the author finds it hard to conceive of some of the planets such as Jupiter and Saturn, for instance, as being adapted, in their present liquid condition for the habitations of human beings, he mentions nevertheless the possibility of their being a solid and habitable planet within the nebulous sphere revealed to our vision by both these planets, and he concedes generally the rationality of the hypothesis that the planets of our solar system are made for habitation, and that many of them at present are

adapted for the existence of beings who resemble ourselves in general, if not in every particular of physical requirements. In his preface the author says:

"The point of view in this book is human interest in the other worlds around us. It presents the latest discoveries among the planets of the solar system and shows their bearings upon the question of life in those planets. . . . It indicates what must be the outlook of the possible inhabitants of some of the other planets towards the earth." . . .

"The subject [of habitability] is by no means abandoned to the tellers of tales and the dreamers of dreams. Men of science eagerly enter into the discussion of the possibilities of other worlds. . . . About Mars in particular a lively war of opinion rages. One side holds that Mars is not only a world capable of having inhabitants but that it actually has them and that they have given visible proofs of their existence and their intelligence, through the changes they have produced upon its surface." "And not only Mars but Venus,—the beautiful twin sister of the earth, who, when she glows in the evening sky, makes everybody a lover of the stars,—and even Mercury, the Moor among the planets, wearing "the shadowed livery of the burnished sun," to whom he is "a neighbor and near bred," and Jupiter, Saturn, and the moon itself—all these have their advocates, who refuse to believe that they are lifeless globes, mere reflectors of useless sunshine. The case of the moon is, in this respect, especially interesting on account of the change that has occurred in the opinions held concerning its physical condition. For a very long time our satellite was confidently, and almost universally, regarded as an airless, waterless and lifeless desert, a completely "dead world," a bare, desiccated skull of rock, circling about the living earth. But within a few years there has been a reaction from this extreme view of the lifelessness of the moon."

Treating of the rings of Saturn the author says:

"In this respect the mystic Swedenborg appears to have had a clearer conception of the true nature of Saturn's rings than did Dr. Dick; for in his book on the 'Earths in the Universe' he says,—using the word 'belt' to describe the phenomenon of the rings:

"'Being questioned concerning that great belt which appears from our earth to rise above the horizon of that planet, and to vary its situations, they [the inhabitants of Saturn] said that it does not appear to them as a belt, but only as somewhat whitish, like snow in the heaven, in various directions.'"

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Professor Simon Newcomb, in his article entitled "The Fairy Land of Geometry," in *Harper's Magazine* for January, speaking of the theories of the "Fourth Dimension," remarks that,—"it is very curious that in these mathematical speculations the most rigorous mathematical methods correspond to the most mythical ideas of the Swedenborgian and

other forms of religion. Right around us, but in a direction which we cannot conceive any more than the inhabitants of "flat-land" can conceive up and down, there may exist not merely another universe but any number of universes. All that physical science can say against this supposition is that even if a fourth dimension exists, there is some law of the matter with which we are acquainted which prevents any of it from entering that dimension, so that in our natural condition it must forever remain unknown to us." This recognition by Prof. Newcomb of Swedenborg's doctrine of the two worlds of discrete degrees of being, one being composed of fixed matter, the other of spiritual substance and its states, the lower being unable to enter the higher, would be more perfect if it were freed entirely from the self-contradictory notion of a "fourth dimension of space," which theory seems like a vain effort to attach dimension to that which is by its very assumption dimensionless. For space, of its very nature, is finite because it involves the idea of large and small, whereas the infinite and the absolute are not to be conceived of as large or small, and spirit partakes of the infinite, in this respect, as having no spacial dimension. At the same time the spiritual world, as the object of spiritual experience, must have the appearance of spaces and spacial dimension to finite minds there, just as everything seen by the mind in nature has to be viewed through the mind's lenses of time-and-space-relations. To be beyond these relations is not to attain, however, to a fourth dimension, but only to be in a world where dimensions are the mind's projection upon its environment, and not a relation unalterably fixed in matter.

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A friend sends a clipping from the Boston *Transcript*, in which a correspondent, not named, says: "In justice to the cause of truth, I cannot permit to pass unnoticed Sir Robert Ball's failure in his recent course of Lowell lectures to mention the name of Swedenborg among the earliest originators of the nebular hypothesis. [?] Professor Ball seems to have fallen into the common error of giving to Kant a much more prominent place than he really deserves, and I think it about time the facts were set forth putting the matter in its true light. Kant was born in 1724 and did not publish his great work, "General Natural History and Theory of the Heavens," till 1755. In 1720, four years before Kant was born, Swedenborg wrote his treatise entitled, *Principia rerum Naturalium ab Experimentis et Geometria*. He then proceeds to give the titles of Chapters in the *Principia*, which followed when Kant was only ten years old; and says, "I think it can be stated with perfect truth that of all evolutionists who have existed, Swedenborg was the most perfect. The *Principia*, published as I have said when Kant was only ten years old, was, as it were, a great egg from which he evolved during the years 1734 to 1745 probably what must be considered, when it is

properly put together and understood, the most perfect system of science and philosophy that human mind has ever conceived."

The correspondent, like most New-Churchmen, fails to make the essential discrimination which exists between Swedenborg's cosmogony and the Nebular Hypothesis.

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## SWEDENBORG SCIENTIFIC ASSOCIATION.

### PROGRAM OF THE FIFTH ANNUAL MEETING

To be held at Huntingdon Valley, Pa. (R. R. Station, Bryn Athyn).

WEDNESDAY, MAY 28TH.

- 10 A. M. Meeting of the Executive Committee.
- 11 A. M. Meeting of the Board of Directors.
- 2:30 P. M. Meeting of the Association. Reading of Reports and Communications.
- 4:30 P. M. Annual Address, by the President.
- 6 P. M. Collation.
- 8 P. M. Social Reception.

THURSDAY, MAY 29TH.

- 10 A. M. Meeting of the Association. Election of officers.  
Paper by Rev. L. F. Hite: "Introduction to Swedenborg's Work on the Infinite."  
Paper by George M. Cooper, M. D.: "Swedenborg's Science and its service to Medical Science."
- 1 P. M. Collation.
- 3 P. M. Meeting of the Association.  
Paper by Rev. Alfred Acton: "An Analysis of Swedenborg's *Ontology*."  
Paper by Rev. C. Th. Odhner: "Historical Introduction to the new edition of the *Principia*."
- 8 P. M. Meeting of the Board of Directors.

Members and friends of the Association, desiring to attend the two days' meetings, are requested to communicate with Mr. C. H. Asplundh, Huntingdon Valley, Pa., before May 20th, in order that arrangements may be made for their entertainment.

Trains for Bryn Athyn leave Reading Terminal at 12th and Market streets, Philadelphia, at 9:28 and 11:13 A. M., and 1:28, 3:13, 4:23, 5:28, and 6:28 P. M.

E. J. E. SCHRECK,  
Secretary.