

### Philosophy from the Word

Central to the philosophy of the New Church is the doctrine of correspondences with its attendant doctrines of influx and degrees. The importance of these has long been recognized. In modern times, the doctrine of correspondence has been employed most widely in two realms. Firstly, in exegesis of the Old and New Testament Word—initially in the Theological Works of Swedenborg and subsequently by New Church ministers and others—and secondly, in tracing the correspondences of the human body, as expressed, for example, in John Worcester's *Physiological Correspondences*,<sup>1</sup> and most recently by N. J. Berridge in the series entitled "Thinking from Correspondences,"<sup>2</sup> by Aubrey T. Allen in a recent article entitled "Sight, the Visual Process, and Doctrine,"<sup>3</sup> and by Linda Simonetti in "The Human Form: Correspondences in Embryology."<sup>4</sup>

This issue includes articles by the last three of these authors. Dr. Berridge's article embodies the ideas upon which he has drawn in writing his series "Thinking from Correspondences," and it is his and the Swedenborg Scientific Association's hope that this three-part article will eventually serve as the introductory chapters of a book containing this series. Dr. Allen offers us a second article on the correspondence of sight. In his imaginative treatment of the correspondences of the visual process—based on revealed doctrine and science—he suggests relationships of the binary organ of sight with conjugal love, the pathway of life, and regeneration. Mrs. Linda Simonetti Odhner offers her reflections on a work by Hugh Kearney entitled *Science and Change 1500-1700*, and relates aspects of the philosophy of the so-called "three traditions" in science of the late Middle Ages to aspects of the philosophy contained within Swedenborg's Theological Works. Mrs. Odhner avoids the common tendency to see everything in either/or terms and assesses the quality of various ideas with her characteristic flair.

<sup>1</sup>John Worcester, *Physiological Correspondences*, Mass. New Church Union, Boston, 1889.

<sup>2</sup>N. J. Berridge, "Thinking from Correspondences," (I-XII), in *New Philosophy* from 1979-1982.

<sup>3</sup>Aubrey T. Allen, "Sight, the Visual Process, and Doctrine," *New Philosophy*, 84:1 & 2:26-34, 1981.

<sup>4</sup>Linda Simonetti, "The Human Form: Correspondences in Embryology," *New Philosophy*, 84:1 & 2:10-25, 1981.

Attention was drawn above to the fact that the doctrine of correspondence has had its widest application in exegesis of the Word, and in relating aspects of man's spiritual life to the correspondential counterparts of that life re-presented in the human body; and we note now the dearth of attention given in New Church literature to the application of the philosophic doctrines in the Word to other areas of human enquiry and life,<sup>5</sup> and in so doing make a plea for their wider application in other realms such as psychology, sociology, political science and economics. By way of emphasis of the need for this, we observe that the quality of one's individual life and of our collective life in society depends on the philosophies that direct it. For example, the current global political crisis is one arising from the confrontation of opposing *philosophies*. For this reason, assessment of this situation must be made *at the same level*—the philosophic one; and such assessment can only be of real value if made from philosophy drawn from the Word.

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<sup>5</sup>This is not to say that there have not been significant studies made that do employ these doctrines; George de Charms' *Growth of the Mind* (Academy Book Room, 1932), Willard D. Pendleton's *Foundations of New Church Education* (Academy Book Room, 1957), and E. Bruce Glenn's "An Inquiry into Aesthetics" (*New Philosophy* 74:2:41-86, 1971) being cases in point. See also Hugo Odhner's "Principles of the New Philosophy" (SSA, *Swed. Scient. Assoc.* reprint) pp. 72-74 under the heading Applications of Philosophy.