

EDITORIAL REMARKS

In This Issue

The mission of the Swedenborg Scientific Association is clear: to promote the scientific and philosophical works of Emanuel Swedenborg by keeping them on print and by encouraging scholarship in their contents. But for many people, even New Church people, there is the lingering question of “What is their real purpose and use?”; “Where do they fit in?”; “How do they comport with the revelatory nature of the theological Writings?”

This issue of *The New Philosophy* sets out to address these questions by looking at not just the science books themselves, but at the long process of Swedenborg’s personal and spiritual development as he produced these books in their turn. “Swedenborg’s Preparation” this has been called, and much has been written to explain the process as the necessary groundwork for his call to be a revelator. As he observes very early in his career, all things must come about by degrees, and his preparation was no different in its dynamics.

What follows is a collection of observations of this process, from different perspectives, of the “pretheological” Swedenborg, who had so much to offer before that call.

From Swedenborg himself (in *Soul-Body Interaction*, n. 20) we find a short answer to the question of “how from a philosopher [he] became a theologian” in his response to German mystic and pietist Friedrich Oetinger.

We present a 1949 address by Rt. Rev. Alfred Acton at 200th Anniversary Celebration of the Publication of *Arcana Caelestia* at Victoria Hall, London, in which he does not disappoint with his encyclopedic knowledge of Swedenborg the scientist at work.

What follow are two essays on Swedenborg’s Preparation—one more biographical and the other more philosophical, to complete this survey of the solid foundation on which the theological Writings rest.

Our final piece on Swedenborg’s preparation was written long ago by a little-remembered giant of his time, the Rev. Glendower C. Ottley (1853–1922), a British member of the General Church of the New Jerusalem. Mr. Ottley’s accomplishments are too numerous for this short introduction, but in New

Church Life of 1922 you will find a fascinating memorial biography. His interests were in education, and the life of science and religion. He flourished in a time when Swedenborg's scientific and theological works were not so remote from one another, and the entire corpus was more universally regarded. His take on the importance of Swedenborg's scientific findings to his final revelation will be of great interest to those of us who also find great value in those works.

As I believe that you will see, there were not two Swedenborgs—one the scientist and the other an enlightened theologian. There was one man, chosen by the Lord from his youth, to follow a path of preparation in (as he explained to Friedrich Oetinger) “the same manner that fishermen were made disciples and apostles by the Lord, and that I also had from early youth been a spiritual fisherman.”

“What is the real purpose and use of the scientific works?”; “Where do they fit in?”; “How do they comport with the revelatory nature of the theological Writings?” I believe that these essays will help to put these questions to rest.

Reuben P. Bell
Editor, *The New Philosophy*