

## IN MEMORIAM

### JAMES W. CORNMAN

James W. Cornman, Professor of Philosophy at the University of Pennsylvania was killed in an automobile accident on May 31, 1978. He was a member of the editorial board of *Philosophical Studies* since the journal was published by Reidel Publishing Company. He provided meticulous and judicious evaluation of a very large number of papers. Countless authors received detailed anonymous comments which he wrote. He had high standards for recommending acceptance. When a paper failed to meet those standards he made every effort to inform the author of revision that would make his work acceptable. Moreover, he applied exactly the same standards to his own work. I particularly recall his mentioning an occasion on which he received critical comment from an editor on a paper of his I thought quite suitable for publication. He remarked that the comments seemed to raise a serious objection and that he would do nothing with the paper until he had the opportunity to meet the objection. That was some years ago and the paper has not to my knowledge appeared in print. I mention this incident because it highlights one of his most salient characteristics — uncompromising integrity.

Professor Cornman was dedicated to philosophy. He believed that by serious philosophical reflection one could expose error and progress by appropriately amending one's position. His work in philosophy was untainted by cynicism. Though he was gratified when his work was appreciated by his peers, I believe that he was remarkably unmotivated by a desire for literary fame. He wanted to make a contribution to philosophy. That motive sufficed. His way of accomplishing this was to argue in detail, in full and rigorous detail, for theses that seemed to him to be correct and against those he thought in error. He reasoned in elaborate detail to advance philosophical thought and to avoid dogmatic assertion. When the demands of rigorous and detailed argument interfered with stylistic gracefulness, there was never any doubt that the latter was to be sacrificed. He planned to cover the major areas of philosophy in his writing. In addition to a textbook, which I was fortunate to co-author with him, he published three philosophical works with Yale University Press: *Metaphysics, Reference and Language*; *Materialism and Sensations*; and *Perception, Common Sense and Science*.

A fourth work on epistemology is close to completion and will be published. His next projected work was in ethics and it is our loss that we shall not know what he would have written. There are those, I am sure, who have neglected to read some of Cornman's published books because of the demands those books make upon the reader. However, those who value the rigorous pursuit of truth more highly than well turned phrases, will find deep gratification in studying his work.

As a teacher and colleague, Cornman insisted that standards not be compromised. For those who would pursue the truth with him in a disinterested and impartial way rather than attempting to conceal shortcomings and defects with ingenuity and conceit, Cornman was generous with time and assistance. Those who sought an ego massage for cleverness were unlikely to find much satisfaction in his company. Cornman could be difficult, as uncompromising people are, but those who were willing to meet his standards of undogmatic argumentation cherished him and were nurtured by their association with him. He was a man of remarkable strength. Those who knew him well knew that one source of that strength was his wife, Betty, who believed in him as he believed in truth. He was an exemplary philosopher and faithful friend. We shall miss him dearly.

KEITH LEHRER