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The Relation of Swedenborg's Scientific to His Theological Writings.

An Essay, Introductory to the New Edition, about to appear, of Swedenborg's Work, "The Soul ; or, Rational Psychology"

PREFATORY NOTICE.

The work, *De Anima*, etc., "The Soul ; or, Rational Psychology," is included in Part VII of the great series entitled "The Animal Kingdom, Considered Anatomically, Physically and Philosophically." It was first published in Latin, by Dr. J. F. I. Tafel, in Tubingen, 1849, and in an English translation with introduction and notes, by the New Church Board of Publication in New York in 1887. The work has had the remarkable good fortune in a few years to find its first edition exhausted, although published at the relatively high price of \$3.00. This edition was a handsome octavo of nearly 400 pages, furnished with an exhaustive index. Since the volume has been out of print there has been a constant, if not large, demand for it, and it is now, in view of the newly aroused interest in Swedenborg's science and philosophy, proposed to bring out a second edition, probably at a reduced price, and in a style uniform with that of the other works to be published under the auspices of the Swedenborg Scientific Association.

Few if any of the modern works on psychology have a greater claim on the attention of thoughtful students than this remarkable work, in which many of the best results of the so-called "New Psychology" of the laboratory are anticipated in all their physiological significance, while there is the constant maintenance of the true discrete separation of these planes of observation from the inner planes of spirit, consciousness and life. The position of "Vitalism" versus "Chemico-Physics" was exhibited in this work by Swedenborg a century and a half ago, with the result of a harmonious correspondence which unites the two planes in a system more complete, practical and satisfactory than any work of either school which present writers have produced. Instead of being antiquated it is pre-eminently the practical psychology for students and teachers of the present day. If we are not mistaken its proper environment and field of influence will be found in the present and future more than in the past stages of this science.

THE TRANSLATOR AND EDITOR.

AN INTRODUCTORY ESSAY, ON SCIENCE AND THEOLOGY IN THE WRITINGS OF SWEDENBORG.

The one animating desire and aim manifest throughout all the scientific and philosophical writings of Swedenborg, may be described in brief as his "Search for the Soul."

This is indicated in the frequent fragmentary treatises on the Soul occurring so frequently throughout the series of his works, and is manifest in the projected scheme of his works outlined in his prologue to the *Regnum Animale*. It there forms the last of the great series. The subject is to be approached slowly, by arduous steps; reverently and in awe of its sublimity, but with eager and never flagging desire.

This desire was executed to the extent of the scientific and philosophic resources of human knowledge in the "*De Anima*, or Rational Psychology,"—the work on "The Soul" with which Swedenborg concluded his great career as a scientist and summed up the results of his labours in the fields of natural, physiological and psychological science.

In this search for the soul we find what we may call the key to the genetic development of all of Swedenborg's system. I say development, because this implies a unity in what preceeds and follows, and a shaping of final results by certain interior ends, even though these be unconsciously entertained. The process is like that of nature, which, itself unconscious, conceals the most profound, definite and unerring purpose. To know the nature of spirit and its relation to matter,—but especially through, first "a knowledge of the soul and of its intercourse with the body," was the two-fold object of his constant search.

If we now regard the "body" in the light of the larger body, the natural world, and the "soul" as meaning the larger soul, the spiritual world, the "knowledge of the soul and its intercourse with the body" becomes identical with that of the spiritual world, and its relation to the natural world, and this occupies a leading place in his theological writings.

Where did Swedenborg seek this knowledge of

the soul? In the soul's own realm; the Soul-Kingdom, *Regnum Animale*: In the living, not dead, human body: In the kingdom of uses as exhibited in the beautiful order, harmony and activities of the human anatomy and physiology.

The Animal Kingdom meant to him the kingdom of the Anima, the realm over which the soul presides as Queen. The relation of this soul to its body or its own kingdom and world was what Swedenborg sought to know. The knowledge which he attained was that which pre-eminently qualified his mind to be the recipient of the great knowledge of the true nature of spirit and the relation of the spiritual to the natural world.

When we consider what a stupendous role this whole doctrine of the human form and the Grand Man is called upon to perform in the revealed knowledges of the heavens, of the spiritual order prevailing there, and even in the doctrine of the Divine Humanity itself, we begin to realize the providential significance of these scientific treatises, and see in what basic relations these sciences stand to the whole realm of spiritual doctrine. And since the body can only be studied in its own environment, or as a part of a great extended body which is the entire elemental universe, therefore to this ultimate basis of all extended Swedenborg's exhaustive survey and the grasp of his mighty system, as witnessed in the work on Chemistry (1721) and the Principia (1734).

The doctrine of Correspondence was derived by Swedenborg, first naturally, that is as a science; it was a deduction of his own reasoning regarding the elemental relations of the universe; a part of his own philosophy, as was the doctrine of Order, Series, Degrees and Modifications on which it rests.—[See An. King. II. 50.51,250.]

This is unmistakably apparent from his own statement and from the repeated applications of and references to, these sciences in his *Animal Kingdom* and elsewhere, especially in his introduction to the *Rational Psychology* and in the work itself.

The doctrine of Correspondence became manifest to Swedenborg in his search for the mode of the soul's intercourse with the body. It was here, right in the human soul's own province, in the relation of our souls to our bodies, that Swedenborg found the key which should solve the problem of the ages and open our minds to a truly heavenly knowledge of the relation of the spiritual to the natural worlds, of spirit to matter, of earth to heaven, of the Written Word to the eternal and essential truth, and of man to God.

Correspondence in its first sense meant to Swedenborg the correspondence of the body to all surrounding spheres, and thence of the soul within to the surrounding body.

The history of the doctrine of Correspondence carries us back to the origin of philosophy among the Greeks, and especially brings into prominent notice the relation of Swedenborg and Aristotle. The his-

toric antecedents of the doctrine of the Influx or the Intercourse of the Soul and Body Swedenborg himself has outlined in several of his theological works, especially in his little but wonderful work on Influx; or the *Intercourse of Soul and Body*, "*De Commercio*," etc.

Swedenborg, as no other writer, deserves the proud title of the Aristotle of modern philosophy; and yet while himself assigning to Aristotle the highest place in all the line of great teachers, calling him the "prince of philosophers," and by the almost endearing title of "our philosopher," he does not hesitate to differ from him on the important question of the intercourse of mind and matter, on philosophic grounds, and later from the standpoint of revealed knowledge. The three systems of Psychology which had chiefly occupied the learned world before his time were represented by the three philosophers seen by Swedenborg in the spiritual world as related in the work of *Influx*, viz: Aristotle, Descartes and Leibnitz. These three systems sought to explain the relation of mind and matter, that is to solve the one great problem which as we have said Swedenborg had set before himself, and to the solution of which the whole philosophical series of his works is devoted. These three systems are known as those of

I: Physical Influx.

II: Occasional or Spiritual Influx.

III: Pre-established Harmony.

These three Swedenborg sought to reconcile by extracting and combining the gist of truth in each, and the resultant doctrine he named the Doctrine of Correspondence, the doctrine which rests upon the equally philosophical and scientific doctrines of Series, Orders, Degrees and Modifications. Correspondence as seen in the plane of nature, is the mutual adaption of inner and outer, higher and lower, grosser or more subtle spheres or bodies, so that there may be reception and communication and transference of motions without commingling or confusion of bodies. It is, therefore, the name we give to that kind of intercourse which may exist between things necessarily and and perpetually discrete. It is that intercourse which is not material influx but the mode or avenue of the influx of force. It is intercourse by contiguity, and not by continuity or confusion of substance.

Such a correspondence in nature is the relation of the wave of ether and its spiral motion to the eye as the organ of vision; then of the eye to the sensory fibre within; then of the sensory fibre to the cortical gland; of the cortical gland to the inner common sensory; then of the common sensory to the imagination; of the imagination to the intellectory; of the intellectory to the Soul; of the Soul to God. *By correspondence the inner may affect the outer without commingling or becoming one with it.* By correspondence things totally different in degree or substance, are nevertheless so adapted that motions in the tremulous vibrations in one may be continued through

the other and so cause and effect be made possible by contiguity, since the prolongation of effect *or its retrocession on its own plane never converts it into its own cause.*

This doctrine of correspondence learned by Swedenborg from the human body and its relation to the soul was afterwards applied by him to all things material and spiritual, and thus to the natural and spiritual worlds.

If this be true, what then is revealed in Swedenborg's writings, or what is there that is not after all the outcome of purely human reasoning and philosophy? Does it therefore follow that what Swedenborg has delivered in his theological writings as a divinely revealed science is after all reducible to a purely natural and scientific knowledge, seeing that in the Doctrine of Degrees and of Correspondence as set forth in the philosophical works, Swedenborg laid no claim to any supernatural illumination as their source, and yet on these doctrines rests the whole scheme of the spiritual metaphysics embraced in his theological works? The answer to this question is of the greatest importance, involving as it does the whole subject of the relation of Swedenborg's Scientific and Philosophical to his Theological writings.

We think it possible to formulate an answer in these words. It is not the knowledge of Correspondence that is supernatural or revealed, but the knowledge of the things that correspond; it is not the knowledge of Discrete Degrees that is supernatural or revealed, but the knowledge of the things that compose those degrees.

That the knowledge of Degrees was a "philosophical" knowledge see A. K. 10, 11, 133; II, 333.

Swedenborg thus speaks of Correspondence after his illumination. In A. C. 4523 he states that:

"The ear corresponds to the air and to sound; the eye is formed correspondently to the modifications of the ether and light; and all the organs and viscera correspond to the things which are in nature."

In A. C. 5131.—"There is a correspondence of sensuous things with natural ones; of material things with spiritual ones; of spiritual with celestial ones; of celestial things with the Lord; there is a succession of correspondence from the Divine down to the ultimate Natural. It is known from philosophy (!) that the end is the first of the cause and the cause is the first of the effect.

"The effect must correspond to the cause and the cause must correspond to the end, and as they correspond, the end can be in the cause and actuate it, and the cause can be in the effect and actuate it; consequently the end through the cause can actuate the effect. Everything in man and nature is successive like cause and effect, and when they thus correspond to each other they act as one." Compare this doctrine with the scientific statements on the "Intercourse of the Soul with the Body," in the work on "The Soul" Chap. XII.

At the close of the philosophical period of Swedenborg's writings, the soul, like an undiscovered continent, remained, it is true, still hidden from his view but the great ship that was to carry the bold navigator thither was built and with supreme human skill by his marvelous mind, secretly guided by the Divine hand; on that ship of the sublime Science of Correspondence, by the favoring winds of heaven he was carried to the great new world of spiritual substance and spiritual life; thence by the same vehicle he has made intelligible to us this new and interesting country and enabled us to read the deep arcana, hitherto hidden but now revealed, which lie equally in all things of nature and in all things of the Word of God.

That the relation of the scientific to the theological systems is genetic or that of an orderly growth and development is perhaps the most wonderful of all the aspects of Swedenborg's teachings. It is the most perfect illustration and corroboration of his wonderful doctrine of Discrete Degrees. His science is not theological; his theology is not scientific; and yet they are related by a perfect correspondence. So far was he opposed to any *a priori* system of science, that is to a science constructed to suit or prop up some prospective theory of philosophy, that he would not trust to his own experiments in natural science but used those instead of other accepted authorities of his time. His inductions were his own; he pursued his search according to the "thread of reason"—(secundum ducem Intellectum seu pilum rationis" Adv. : I. p. 7.) and reverently shrank from giving the name of divine revelation to any of these results of his own investigations. That his science was not only not built with the conscious intention of furnishing a substructure to his theology, but was in some particulars in actual conflict with the later teaching from revelation, *in those realms where it transcended nature and presumed to construct a system of spiritual science*, is evident from what the work on the Soul teaches regarding the condition of the Soul after death; as, that it has no particular form but may assume any form; [See "The Soul or Rational Psychology; No. 521, 522"] that it may take wings and fly as a bird or assume any other shape suited to its imperial and sovereign desire, being free from all limitations of nature or natural heredity. Notice also what he says in this work about the final consummation of the world and the purging fires which shall finally sever the soul from the last entanglements of the body. These are instances where the science undertook to be prophetic. That these predictions were regarded by Swedenborg himself as *outside the realm of pure science, and thus as forming no part of his own system as a science*, is evident from his remark in No. 524 of the same work, "that we shall probably laugh in the other world at the guesses we have here indulged in about the future state of the soul." Had he been the usual sort of

natural philosopher he would have insisted on having his subsequent theological system harmonize with these predictions. Not so in the case of a veritable seer. When the curtain fell revealing to his vision the real spiritual world, the world which is the inner or spiritual world of this human world of ours, he saw the soul in its truly human aspects, and entirely relieved of those habiliments which it has inherited from pagan philosophers and mediaeval schoolmen. *Man after death is a spirit in perfect human form*, he says, such as it had in this world. The "end of the world" he tells us now, when speaking as the inspired interpreter of the holy Word, is the consummation of an age of human experience introductory to a new spiritual dispensation among mankind. This blank contradiction to his own statements, written within a space of, say, five years is convincing proof that whatever relation exists between his scientific and theological writings it is a strictly natural and not a contrived or purposed one. Swedenborg neither constructed a science with a view to building thereon a theology nor did he adapt his theology to a previously constructed science. Each system stands in its own plane; and the agreement between them is that of the correspondence which is between things of natural growth, i. e. the agreement of truth appearing in several planes of divine order. As the science is not theological so the theology is not scientific. The science rests on its basis of reason and experiment; the theology on its basis of revelation in the Word: the two do not agree by fusion; but they do agree by the correspondence that exists between discrete degrees in divine order.

The result of this agreement is that the warfare between science and religious faith is at an end, as it

never could have been except for this final and wonderful provision of Divine Providence. In the natural course of things as they tended except for this, theology had got so out of touch with science that men who loved natural truth and sought for a deeper knowledge of the wonders of nature were almost driven to the rejection of revealed religion. The only recourse for theology was to lose itself in politics or in sociology or occultism and so in the guise of purely natural science still keep its hold on the attention of men if even meanwhile it was losing their reverence and their respect. At the same time science might be posing as the sacred vestal in the temple of truth and claim to be the only object of real reverence or worship still left to man. In Swedenborg the normal order and the complete trine of mental life is restored. Science, Philosophy, Theology; the study of effects, of causes, of ends; each of these finds itself unhindered by the cramping of any human system, and at the same time placed in a purely harmonious relation to the other two. The secret of universality has been reached, by which principles of the utmost simplicity and clearness open paths of application to an infinity of details. The earth remains the solid tangible and durable old earth as of old, but it glows with a new light and beauty when seen through Swedenborg's lens *sub specie aeternitatis*. Heaven, the "mundus intelligibilis" of Kant's *Inaugural Dissertation*, is not an unhuman and unreal world, it is only the one world "seen with another vision." Earth, Spirit, God are to these respective planes of knowledge and faith the distinct but harmonious elements of the trinal unity of the One.

FRANK SEWALL.

1618 Riggs Place, Washington, D. C.

Principia Studies. I--The Natural Point and First Aura.

Read before the Swedenborg Philosophy Club, of Chicago, Nov. 5, 1898.

At this day, all preliminary studies of Swedenborg's Philosophy must take account of his theological teachings and be interpreted in the light of his whole doctrine. Scientific investigations, whether conducted under the guidance of his doctrine, or analyzed and grouped for the purpose of illustrating and confirming the doctrine, must be carried on in a scientific spirit which is impartially inductive and characterized by a supreme regard for fact, not doctrine. The investigation and grasp of the whole doctrine, however, is a philosophic process, and involves a conception of not only what the author may be supposed to have understood at the time, but of what he understood at any time. It becomes more and more evident at every step of the investigation that, whatever the processes of the development of his philosophy, and however unconscious he may have been at any

stage of the unity and scope of its plan, there is, nevertheless, a unity so complete as to argue a Divine syntheses throughout. Indeed, one is almost compelled to conclude that Swedenborg saw his end from the beginning, even to the outlines of the Infinite, and his philosophical development and introduction into the spiritual, were only the successive processes of utilization of what he had conceived as a doctrine of God, man, nature.

Dr. R. L. Tafel, in his "Science and Philosophy" (Part III), in "Words for the New Church," No. VI, gives the very helpful classification of Swedenborg's work, prior to his illumination, as those devoted to the study of the Macrocosm and the Microcosm. Prior to 1734, or the production of the Principia, the author's attention was mainly given to the material or outer world. These works constitute the distinctively