

SWEDENBORG'S RATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY

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LECTURE VI

THE THREE MINDS AND THEIR AFFECTIONS

At no stage in our present study of the *Rational Psychology* has there been any pretence of doing real justice to the book. This, however, is especially the case now that we attempt to set before our view a sort of summary concept of the whole body of affections that a man can experience. The book, throughout, does very much more than we have done, except that we have occasionally made comparisons with the Writings and pointed to certain observations, which for obvious reasons could not fall within the compass of the book itself. The book is written in a concentrated style, and with a mathematical precision which makes for detailed summaries, and which seems to suggest countless things in what is curtly said. In our present sections of the book we find not only a general presentation of the groups of affections belonging to the animus, the rational mind, and the soul, respectively, but also lengthy lists of special affections attributed to each group, and a penetrating analysis of each of these individual affections. What we will attempt to do is merely to make a general distinction among the three degrees just alluded to, and to suggest the types of affection that belong to each degree.

THREE MINDS

The animus, the rational mind, and the soul are all treated of as minds. In no. 296 the soul is called "the mind properly so called," and we have the following summary presentation of the three minds:

That the mind properly so called may communicate with the animus, and by the animus with the body, there intervenes a mind which is called rational. (*Ibid.*)

We recall the four degrees of sensation: 1) the sensation of the organs of the five senses; 2) the sensation in the interior sensory or cortical gland, a sensation that is called perception; 3) the

sensation called intellection in the intellectory; and 4) the "inmost sensation of all" in the soul.

Now, the organs of the five senses, of course, have no immediate share in mental activity. All mental activity is in the brain itself. There are only three interior sensories. However, from here to jump to the conclusion that the three minds are in a way to be identified with the three interior sensories, would be precipitate. For as soon as the pure intellectory is contemplated, it is realized that this cannot be said to be the seat itself of the rational mind; nor can the pure intellect be identified with the rational mind.

Where and what is the rational mind? I think it is basically that question that caused Swedenborg to complain as follows at the outset of his chapter on "The Animus and the Rational Mind."

In the science of rational psychology, nothing is more difficult than clearly to understand what specially the animus is, and what the mind; and even if this is understood, than clearly to set it forth; for the several operations which are carried on in our inner sensories appear like a little chaos, of which we do not distinctly see even the surface, still less the parts, one of which adheres to the other as in a chain. (282)

Conscious of the chaos that waited for his search, he set out to sort out and distinguish step by step. These steps we cannot follow here. Instead *we* jump to some of the conclusions, though he did not.

It is at this point we meet the idea that in a sense there are only *two* minds, viz., the soul and the animus. In this view the intellectory relates in a general way to the soul as the body does to the animus. I suggest that it is in this general view we see the relationship between the two worlds, the spiritual and the natural. The same distinction into two is also frequently made in the Writings, when we hear only of the spiritual or internal mind, and the natural or external mind; that is to say, without any immediate reference to the three discrete degrees of the mind which are designated as the natural, spiritual, and celestial. A glimpse of this matter from our book:

The intellectory, the highly pure cortical substance of the internal sensory, can by no means exist and subsist of itself. It must consist of substances still more simple, that is, of the most simple substances of its kingdom. These most simple substances are what we call the soul, within which is life, and which is the true mind of its intellectory, and consequently, the life

of the animus. . . . It is therefore the superior mind and the inferior mind, that is, the mind properly so called [and the animus], which rule in the animate body and mutually communicate their operations with each other. The mind properly so called is spiritual, but the animus is purely natural, and can be said to be corporeal in that it is directly affected by the harmonies of the corporeal senses and flows directly into the countenance of the body and the forms of corporeal actions. (294, 295)

It is from that mutual communication that the rational mind derives its existence.

Thus the superior mind and the animus come together, and, being conjoined in the internal sensory, they bring forth this their common offspring. (297)

What the rational mind has, or gets, it cannot possibly acquire from itself. It draws from below, and this by "cultivation, sciences and art." In fact, it is able in process of time to become such "that it possesses in itself more than all the sciences in the universe can ever exhaust" (296). Yet this cannot be derived solely from cultivation and experience; nor can it be self-derived.

There must certainly be a superior mind which shall flow in; a mind which is pure and which is spiritual and possesses in itself all that nature which we ourselves admire in the rational mind as being superior, and from which we draw only some drops in order that we may conceive and bring forth our theoretical and physiological sciences. (296)

It follows then, that

this mind, called the rational, is *not* properly the mind, for it is intermediate between the mind and the animus, and partakes of both, and so is born of both. The spiritual mind flows into it from above, and the natural mind or animus from below. *This is the reason why it is called rational*; for to be rational, it must partake of the spiritual and the natural. (297; ital. added.)

From this, in its turn, it follows further, that

the more that mind communicates with the spiritual mind, the more eminently rational it is, or the more spiritual; but the more it receives from the animus or natural mind, the less rational it is, or the more corporeal. (297)

It is in this that we discern the contours of the essential human. And we recall the revealed truth that "the human begins in the inmosts of the rational" (AC 2106:e). The essential human must be free; and it cannot be, unless it is set between what is spiritual and what is natural, and so is able to draw close to the one and away from the other, or to love the one more than the other. It is clear that the character of the man is measured by his choice in this

respect. It is clear too, that the man who loses sight of the spiritual altogether, or who cuts it off from his love and his awareness, destroys the human in himself.

The rational mind is like the tongue which rules the balance. In the human body is nothing save soul and body, or nothing save the spiritual and natural. All other things which are intermediate partake of both; and thus partaking, therefore, like a balance, they depend on both. In order, therefore, that each may be held in equilibrium, a rational mind is granted, that it may be a *moderator* and *director*. Thus, *in this point alone is it active; in all else it is passive.* (302; ital. added.)

Many have felt that the man himself vanishes from sight by virtue of the doctrine that he is nothing but a receptacle of life; and the difficulty has frequently been met by observing that one thing does not flow in, namely his choice itself. Now the philosopher assists the understanding by showing that the rational (in which the human essentially consists) is passive in all things save one: namely in its capacity of moderator and director.

THE SEAT OF THE RATIONAL

If it be asked, Where is this rational? then the answer is that it is seated in the texture of the cortical gland; for even as the higher thought and judgment, being nothing but purer forms of the imagination, are based on the same substance that also houses the imagination, so the rational lingers in the superior forms which are induced on this substance through life on earth. We do suggest, however, that the simple cortex cannot but be affected by this same process; for it constantly *sensates* that process, and will therefore, by definition, *remember* it. In other words, we suggest that while the rational is being molded in the general plane of sense impressions, imagination, and thought, it at the same time makes its mark on the pure intellectory, indeed, so much so that the character itself (the memory of what has transpired in the rational) is stamped upon it. If we are to believe—and I see no alternative to such belief—that the limbus, or finest things of nature which are retained after death, are taken from the pure intellectory, then this point has wide ramifications.

THE AFFECTIONS OF THE ANIMUS

In the light of the above it will not be difficult to know what affections, in general, belong to each region of our inner life. If

the animus is defined as "the form of the material ideas of our common sensory" (285), or as "the universal affection of the sensory, (so) that affections taken together constitute the animus" (*ibid.*), or as "the life of sensations" (289:e), then it is clear that all the affections of the animus are essentially animal in nature, for they are all closely related to the body. Many of the terms that designate these affections, however, will also lend themselves to the description of rational affections, for what may be only animal in essence is also capable of being infilled with what is human and so of being lifted up. The following selection from Swedenborg's list will suggest the type of affections that the animus may experience: Gladness; sadness; venereal love; love of parents toward children; love of society and country; love towards companions, and friendship; love of self; ambition; humility in the sense of contempt of self; depression; hope; despair; love of the world and the body.

THE AFFECTIONS OF THE SOUL

By contrast, the affections of the soul are all spiritual in essence. Again, a list will draw up an outline of what belongs here, and we note particularly the first affection in the list, and suggest that all subsequent affections are derived from this: Love of a Being above oneself; love of a comrade as oneself; loving society as being many selves; the love of being close to the one loved (namely, close to God; and at this point we pause to quote: "When this love is pure, that is, when it is joined with love toward the neighbor, it is devoid of all envy, if another is closer to Him and superior to oneself; for he then loves the superior the more because he is closer to God whom he himself also loves," 440); the love of one's body; love of immortality; spiritual zeal; the love of propagating the kingdom and city of God.

AFFECTIONS OF THE RATIONAL MIND

These all partake of the above affections, that is to say, both those relating to the animus and those relating to the soul. Nevertheless, some peculiar affections of the rational will clarify the issue further: The love of understanding and being wise; the love of knowing things hidden; the love of foreknowing the future; the love of truths and principles; the love of good and evil; conscience; the love of virtues and vices; the love of honor and decorum.

These are some of the affections of the three minds. There are countless more. Affections are interests, and anyone may know something of his own affections, and their degrees, by attending to things that catch and hold his interest. We might have said delights instead of interests, for our interest is measured by the delight we attach to the matter. What are our more sublime interests and their delights? The answer to this question will tell us something about the affections of our soul, *i.e.*, our "mind properly so called." And what things relating to the body and the world engage our attention? Here the affections of our animus present themselves to view. Again, when our mind is reaching for new things, or assembling things already learned: when it is constructively engaged—analyzing, judging, determining—then what are the objects of its preference? What manner of ideas, plans, associations, harmonies give it delights? Questions of this nature place our rational mind under review.

Of course, our author is essentially talking of only one mind, but one of three degrees. Only one person perceives the various affections Swedenborg is analyzing. But the analyst observes with acute penetration that some affections are superior in nature, others inferior, and yet others intermediate. Perhaps his terminology adopts the "three minds" only because it is easier, for instance, to say "the rational mind" than "the intermediate affections and ideas of The Mind."

But we must part from our book, although several challenging sections have not even been touched. Possibly some persons who have had the patience to read through our attempt at sidelighting Swedenborg's *Rational Psychology* may be induced to peruse again that work, or else to take it up for the first time. Its pages invite a rewarding study. And if such be the inducement, then the chief purpose of the foregoing review will have been achieved.

And now, as a postscript to the above articles, I would like to list :

SEVEN REASONS

why I believe that Swedenborg's philosophical works ought to have a prominent place in New Church education, and therefore in our curriculum.

1) Swedenborg was prepared for his call as revelator, both with reference to his will and understanding. His understanding was peculiarly ordered by means of his studies.

In *Intercourse between the Soul and the Body* we read :

I was once asked how from a philosopher I became a theologian; and answered, in the same manner that fishermen were made disciples and apostles by the Lord; and that I also from early youth had been a spiritual fisherman. On hearing this the inquirer asked, What is a spiritual fisherman? I replied that a fisherman in the spiritual sense of the Word, signifies a man who investigates and teaches natural truths, and afterwards spiritual truths, rationally. (20)

This means (a) that Swedenborg had discovered and taught natural truths and (b) that in doing so he had cultivated his rational faculty. The understanding is prepared with no one, save by means of truths.

In this context we recall the following from the pages of Revelation :

There are several reasons why the New Church that is called the Holy Jerusalem is to have its beginning with a few, afterwards to be with many, and finally reach fulness. First, its doctrine, which is the doctrine of love to the Lord and charity towards the neighbor, can be acknowledged and thus received only by those who are interiorly affected by truths, and those only can be interiorly affected by truths who have the ability to see them, and those only see truths *who have cultivated their intellectual faculty*, and have not destroyed it in themselves by the loves of self and of the world. (AE 732; ital. added. There follow two further reasons for the small beginning of the New Church.)

2) All the laws of nature, whether operating in the macrocosm of the universe or in the microcosm of the human organic, are Divine. Hence these laws must build the mind in its external or natural aspect, even as spiritual laws build it in its interior region. Between natural laws and spiritual laws there is correspondence.

Swedenborg studied those laws of nature with amazing penetration; and he taught them with—I think—unsurpassed clarity and precision.

The laws of nature are truly seen for what they are, only when they stand forth as laws of the Creator, thus eternal and immutable. The very aim and essence of the philosophical works is to show this.

This view does not make the philosophical works infallible, even

as no man's understanding of any law is infallible. But the fallibility of human understanding does not retract from the power of the law, when it is discovered and acknowledged. Only the law itself, whether natural or spiritual, is infallible. I hold that the philosophical works relate to the order of nature as the works of an enlightened New Church theologian relate to the Heavenly Doctrines. Of course, New Church scientists and philosophers would place themselves in the same category with Swedenborg, the philosopher, by searching out the arcana of nature in the same spirit that he did.

3) The rational mind is apt to ask the question "How?" many times over. When it comes to natural law (and sometimes even spiritual law) a correct answer to that question is not indispensable to salvation; but further glory is ascribed to the Lord when the answer is found. Swedenborg's works, especially on cosmology and anatomy, assist in answering certain pertinent questions of this nature as I think we may say no other books, outside Revelation, so far in existence do. *How* did the Infinite produce the finite out of itself in creating? *How* did natural things come forth out of spiritual? *How* is the Infinite One present in the ultimates of His work on all intermediate planes? *How* does the human soul, being spiritual, operate in its body which is natural?

4) The Writings reveal many spiritual truths without direct reference to the letter of the Word. In such cases those truths are in direct correspondence with the laws and phenomena of nature. For the most part these laws and phenomena are not analyzed in the Writings; but they are referred to. Thus it is either assumed that the reader is familiar with them or implied that he may see the spiritual truth with sufficient clarity to accept it without such familiarity. Clearly, the person who is informed with regard to the natural counterpart of the spiritual truth can see this truth more deeply and experience its power more fully. To illustrate this point let me quote the following from the Writings:

Because the love and the wisdom, and therefore the will and the understanding, are the things which are called the soul, and in what follows it is to be shown how the soul acts upon the body and operates all its affairs, and this knowledge may be got out of the correspondence of the heart with the will and of the lungs with the understanding, therefore the points which follow *have been discovered through that correspondence.* (DLW 398. Ital. added.)

Afterwards the entire section that follows (398-431) is based on that correspondence, and illustrated by the relationship of the heart and lungs and the respective functions of these organs.

I suggest that the reference to the natural laws and phenomena in the Writings is especially and immediately to these things as set forth in the philosophical works, and this simply because the revelator's own mind was based on them.

5) Swedenborg's philosophical works are not antiquated. Those who think they are, are possibly guilty of confusing science with the tools of science. The fact that electricity was little known in Swedenborg's day did not prevent him from discovering the mode whereby the cortical glands communicate through the nerve fibres with the muscular fibres of the body (a mode which I understand is now related to electricity). The fact that the art of splitting atoms was reserved to our modern times did not hinder Swedenborg from knowing that there is no entity which cannot be seen to contain other, smaller and still more perfect entities; nor that the powers latent in created things increase in proportion to their being opened up interiorly.

Many who have actually studied the philosophical works (and among them not only New Church men) would tend to say that those works are in fact in important respects, and even in some purely scientific matters, in advance of our day, rather than behind it.

A recent and authoritative testimony to this effect is contained in an article, entitled "Emanuel Swedenborg (1688-1772) and his Contributions to Neurology," by Doctors Konrad Akert and Michael P. Hammond, reprinted in *NEW PHILOSOPHY*, 1966, pp. 210-221. It may be fitting to quote here the closing words of these authors :

... For there is evidence that Swedenborg anticipated a number of anatomical discoveries well in advance of their "classical" descriptions; *e.g.* the perivascular spaces, described by Virchow and Robin a century after Swedenborg wrote of them, the foramen Magendi, the cerebro-spinal fluid and its course, to name several (Woollam, 1957). But enough has been said to give some impression of the scope of this man's genius, as well as to demonstrate his deep interest in and contribution to the study of the brain. Some of the quotations we have presented here could not have been appreciated as little as fifty years ago. It is therefore possible to wonder whether the coming decades may not equip us to find other ideas in

Swedenborg's writings which will also take on an air of premature brilliance, where they now appear strange and unimportant.

Emanuel Swedenborg, whose intellectual breadth and productiveness have earned for him a high rank in many fields, clearly deserves a more prominent position in the history of neurological science than he has up till now been accorded. (NEW PHILOSOPHY, 1966, pp. 220-221)

It should be noted that this and similar eulogies refer essentially to Swedenborg as a *scientist*. However, Swedenborg was *philosopher* more than scientist, and his scientific observations and analyses were used by him as stepping stones in his search for the Divine and spiritual in creation.

6) The philosophical works could serve as textbooks in the promotion of logical, mathematical, constructive thinking. By their orderliness they assist the mind in acquiring sharpness and distinctness within the scope of things known.

7) The ideal of New Church education is to instruct and guide minds in the ability to see spiritual and natural truths together, that is, to see the presence and purpose of internal and eternal truths in all natural operations; and further to introduce thereby into the universal sphere of use. Swedenborg's philosophical works are wholly congruent with these ideals.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE FOR THE SEVENTIETH
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