

THE USE OF THE STUDY OF THE MIND

ERIK SANDSTRÖM

It is both an honor and a pleasure to have a share in paying tribute to Dr. Hugo Lj. Odhner on this occasion, and without diminishing the honor, I feel in this case even more conscious of the pleasure.

I am to speak a little about the use of studying the mind. In a sense we are studying Dr. Odhner's mind tonight, but although this is an age of specialization we permit ourselves to widen the scope to include also the minds of the rest of mankind, yet do this while acknowledging the many helpful and studious contributions that have flowed from his. I am personally indebted to him, both as a former pupil of his and as a fellow-teacher, having inherited not only one of his courses in the Theological School but also his notes for that course. In this case I refer particularly to some 120 typescript pages on "The Human Mind, Its Faculties and Degrees."

The philosophy of the New Church is a dualistic one. There are the spiritual world and the natural world, mind and matter. The relationship and mutual dependence of these, in both the macrocosmic and microcosmic scale, has been, I believe, the special interest of our honored friend. Together the two realms constitute the kingdom of God, which reflects the power and glory of its Creator. Each has its own text as it were, the one being science in all its forms, the other the Word of the Lord, and each text is concerned with laws beyond man's making. To see the harmony between the one text and the other, thus between the one world and the other, is the task of the philosopher—not the speculating philosopher, nor yet the mere student of the history of philosophic thought, but the lover of wisdom.

Such a philosopher will look upon natural knowledge in the light of spiritual truth. His first concern will be Divine Revelation. And not only will he see in its light when he views the natural envelopment of the interior and essential creation of God, but he will also see the oneness of the envelopment and the thing contained, for as he studies he will be in the very embrace of the living laws of correspondence. While reading these laws from without he will discern their operation itself from within. If he begins, as he must, with the alphabet of correspondence, he will end up

with the proclamation of influx. Moreover, in all this he will see that while the one realm is enveloping, the other is developing, and that in the interior realm, creating is the same as saving. The truly human mind, the eternal citizen of the living and developing world, is, like its envelopment, a created thing: the product of Divine Salvation. It is thus that the Creator and Ruler of both worlds is seen to be the same as the Saviour.

And so, with our friend, and aided by his several books and numerous articles and, for some of us, by at least some of his many as yet unpublished manuscripts, we limit ourselves to the particular question with which these few remarks are immediately concerned: What is the use of the study of the mind?

And that is not a small question. But we can say, first, that the use of studying is in order that we may know; and, second, that the use of knowing is that we may apply. Study is of course of no use unless it leads to knowledge and the constructive utilization of knowledge.

The mind is complex, and yet it is given to it to know itself. It is complex particularly because it is influenced by evil as well as by good, and because it stores away within itself receptacles for each. Were it not for evil the mind would stand forth as one beautiful, harmonious whole, whose higher degrees would transmit the rays of the sun of heaven, and whose lower strata would reflect with varying splendor those rays. The sensuous and corporeal would not stand in opposition, nor would the imaginative pollute itself, or the rational degrade itself to the contemptible role of both reasoning against truth and confirming evil.

Organically speaking, however, and without reference to the quality induced on the organic, the mind is a clear ladder from earth to heaven, and from heaven to God. In his philosophical works Swedenborg marks the rungs of this ladder with the terms memory, imagination, human intellect, pure intellect, and soul. The present speaker, while believing that there is a remarkable agreement between the philosophical works and the Writings themselves, would nevertheless note that the ideas set forth in the Writings are distinct in that they are divested of the analytical speculations of the philosopher and sealed with the hallmark of final truth. Here appropriately the terms also shift and become more embracive in scope. What makes the difference is not only that they have the Divine imprint, but at the same time that they

directly relate to and reflect the spiritual world—a world that was beyond the immediate reach of the philosopher but was revealed to the theologian. The terms vary, but in general we have: the exterior and the interior natural, the rational, the spiritual, the celestial, and uppermost and nearest to the Lord, the inmost human internal. Within this general structure we meet many combinations, for instance the spiritual of the celestial, the spiritual-rational, the natural-rational, etc. And when terms vary, it is for the sake of being more descriptive as to quality as required by the context. For example, the exterior natural may at times be more appropriately described as the sensuous of the corporeal.

As I see it the use of knowing the structure of the mind has both an intellectual and an affectional (or will) aspect, and together the two aspects combine in finitely reflecting the infinite glory of the Divine Human of the Lord. For the mind of man, when re-created and reborn, that is, saved, is an image of the Divine Human after His likeness. Not that we are to see the Lord's Human in comparison with our own minds—rather the other way around—but the mind of man may, because it is an image, as it were illustrate the nature of the Lord's Divinely Human Mind and help to make the latter comprehensible to us. The revealer of the Lord's Human is not our mind but the Word, especially that form of the Word that is addressed to the rational. And it is the Word that reveals our mind also.

The intellectual use (if such expression is allowable) of knowing the mind is that we may see our destiny. The organic receptacles are there, and are to be infilled with what properly belongs to them. The exterior natural must be fortified, through both study and experience, with an expanding and accurate memory, the interior natural with true and practical moral concepts, the rational with insight into spiritual and natural values, the spiritual with the vision of truth as the law of charity, and the celestial with the perception of use from love to the Divine Author of all use. Without these things the organics of the mind are empty or, worse, defiled.

But the intellectual use is only a means to an end; for to what purpose should we know our destiny, except that we might achieve it, at least in the lowest form of heavenly life? So it is that the better use of knowing the mind—our mind—is that we may be led beyond blind obedience to the shunning of evil on a deeper de-

gree than the mere act, as well as shunning it on the level of the act itself. It is contended that this deeper shunning is impossible without some knowledge of the mind; for unless it is known that there is something inside the exterior sensuous degree, how can we become interested in even searching out what is there, let alone fighting it? So it is that the affectional or will aspect of the use of knowing the mind is more worthy and more determinative than the intellectual aspect. We speak of shunning evil in connection with the affectional aspect, because while ideas may be received, at least in moments of mental elevation, without shunning evil, affections may not. This is what is involved in the statement that "spiritual light flows in with man through three degrees, but not spiritual heat, except so far as man shuns evils as sins and looks to the Lord." (DLW 242)

Yet even shunning evil is not the final end. Battle is not its own purpose. The final end is good, and there is no other genuine good than the worship of the Lord in His Divine Human through a life of use done as service and done from enlightened—we may even say dynamic—judgment. This good cannot exist except in and from the inner realm of the mind. The corporeal memory does not know how.

And now these summary remarks are handed over as a brief and modest contribution in the program of honoring Dr. Odhner. He is in an eminent sense a doctor, for "doctor" means one who teaches. And as for the above he might well say: "A fair effort, my dear fellow, but you were not quite accurate in this or that point." In which case I would reply: "You are more likely to be right than not, Sir; and let us hear you further."

A RESPONSE FROM DR. ODHNER

May 22, 1969

Miss Morna Hyatt
 Secretary, The Swedenborg Scientific Association
 Bryn Athyn, Pa.

It is hard for me to express—on behalf of my wife as well as of myself—how touched we were by the gift of flowers, by the honorarium which was tendered me at the Annual Meeting on May 12, and—especially—by the undeserved dedication of the program to the fields of my studies in the philosophy of Swedenborg and its potential uses for the New Church.

I am deeply complimented in having these studies discussed by such a distinguished panel of speakers.

With heartfelt thanks to the Board of the SSA and wishes for the enduring fruitfulness of the Association in its eminent uses.

Sincerely,
 (signed) HUGO LJ. ODHNER

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At a meeting of the Board of Directors following the annual meeting on May 12, 1969, the following officers were re-elected.

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