

THE PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION

September 1976, marks the one-hundredth anniversary of the opening of the Academy of the New Church. For those of us on the editorial board of THE NEW PHILOSOPHY this is a time for celebration and reflection, for the Academy is our alma mater.

Our reflections lead us back to the beginnings of institutions dedicated to what we have come to call "New Church education." And so it was interesting to find a series of four articles under the general title "The Philosophy of Education" published in the first issues of THE NEW PHILOSOPHY in the years 1898 and 1899. The author was the Rev. John Whitehead who was then both the editor and publisher of the journal, the Swedenborg Scientific Association being only in its formative stages at the time.

The first of these articles, from the January, 1898 issue and entitled "Ends and Purposes," is reprinted in the pages that follow. Apart from the style in which it is written, much of what it says applies to the world in which we live today and to the ends and purposes which education in the light of the principles presented in the works of Swedenborg and in the Writings of the Second Coming must seek to realize.

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ENDS AND PURPOSES

The work of education is one of the most important of human employments. In its widest sense it includes the instruction of adults as well as children, in spiritual as well as in natural things, and in this sense it is the most important of all uses, because it not only prepares for a good and useful life in this world, but it also prepares for eternal life in heaven.

In every age education has received much attention, but its nature and quality has ever been according to the ideas and ends of the people themselves. When war was the chief purpose of nations, the boys and youth were trained and educated with the purpose of making them hardy, strong and skillful in the use of the weapons of war. When business and money making have been the ruling motives of families and nations, the education and training have taken a form corresponding with this quality. So also in other directions, the quality, nature and purposes of a people are reflected in the education of the young. When any great change takes place

in human society by the reception of new ideas, whether they be spiritual, social, or civil, the education of the children of that people soon becomes affected by the change. The reason for this is evident. All the affections and purposes of parents centre in their children, and when any states become fixed in the national life of a people, they will mould the course of education into agreement with themselves. An intensely religious people will impress its ideas on the young in its educational work, a people of materialistic tendencies will likewise mould the minds of the young into agreement with its state.

Since the nature and ruling motives of people modify the education of the children, it is undoubtedly true that a deeper study of human nature and of the Divine Word in its adaptation to human needs and wants, will bring forth important principles which will modify and perfect the educational work of the present day. The study of psychology at this day is receiving much attention because of its application to the problems of education. So also in the development of the philosophy of the New Church, it has been seen that this also has its application to the questions of education, and as this is a New Philosophy derived from the principles of the Divine Word, and which is also in harmony with reason and science, it is evident that this philosophy must produce a New Education which will harmonize the best features of all previous systems and perfect them, forming a New Education superior to them all, in fulfilment of the prophecy "Behold I make all things New."

In bringing forth these principles and applying them to the solution of education problems, we will first of all inquire, what should be the end and aim of education? The answer to this question will give us the point of view from which we ought to consider the subject. We have shown in various articles in *THE NEW PHILOSOPHY* that there are discrete degrees of substances, and that the human mind is organized of spiritual substances, and the human body of natural substances. There are also degrees in each plane, and a true development of human nature must provide for the cultivation of all these planes, and this can be done systematically and perfectly only as we know of these degrees, and understand and acquire the means by which these degrees are developed and perfected. The physical body has its laws of health which must be observed; the food suitable to its nourishment must be obtained and appropriated. The body must be suitably exercised in order that

it may grow in stature and acquire skill and strength. It is similar with the human mind. It is organized of higher or spiritual substances. Each degree has its appropriate food and exercise, which, when supplied, nourish and develop it; but when lacking, its capacities remain dormant; but if unsuitable food and exercise is given, the mind and its functions are injured. The spirit needs a higher wisdom than the body for the direction of its culture, because it serves a higher use, and its organism endures to eternity; but its cultivation and development is frequently directed by those who are entirely ignorant of its nature. When this is the case, injury or defective development must surely result.

In the work on the *Last Judgment*, we read concerning the nature of man and his creation, as follows:

The human race is the basis on which heaven is founded. This is because man was created last, and that which is last created is the basis of all that precedes. Creation commenced from the supreme or inmost, because from the Divine; and proceeded to ultimates or extremes, and then first subsisted. The ultimate of creation is the natural world, including the terraqueous globe, with all things on it. When these were finished, *then man was created, and into him were collated all things of Divine order from first to last; into his inmost were collated all those things of that order which are primary; and into his ultimates those things which are ultimate; so that man was made Divine order in form; hence it is that all things in man and with man, are both from heaven and from the world; those of his mind from heaven, and those of his body from the world; for the things of heaven inflow into his thoughts and affections, and dispose them, (that is, arrange them) according to reception by his spirit, and the things of the world inflow into his sensations and pleasures, and dispose them according to reception in his body, but still in accommodation to their agreement with the thoughts and affections of his spirit. . . . From the above order of creation it may appear, that such is the binding chain of connection from first to last, that all things together make one, in which the prior cannot be separated from the posterior, (just as the cause cannot be separated from the effect); and that thus the spiritual world cannot be separated from the natural, nor the natural world from the spiritual, nor the angelic heaven from the human race, nor the human race from the angelic heaven; wherefore it is provided by the Lord, that each shall afford a mutual assistance to the other, that is the angelic heaven to the human race, and the human race to the angelic heaven. [L] 6]*

According to the order of Creation, the spiritual and the natural sides of man were intended to be developed harmoniously; each was designed to serve a use to the other. Neither, when taken alone, can perform the use intended. In man were collected all things of Divine order from first to last, and through him Creation

returns to the Creator whence it originated. If man's development took place like the growth of a tree or of a mere animal, rigidly following a certain type over which he exercised no control, there would be no possibility of any deviation from the order of God's law impressed on him from Creation, and according to which the Creator originally designed him. But man was created with free will, so he can, to a certain extent and degree, control and direct his own development. He can co-operate with the Divine order and follow it; or he can oppose the Divine order and pervert it. Thus, in *Last Judgment* 10, it is written :

It is indeed possible that the human race on one earth may perish, which comes to pass when they separate themselves from the Divine, for then man no longer has spiritual life, but only natural, like that of beasts; and when man is such no society can be formed, and held bound by laws, since without the influx of heaven, and thus without the Divine government, men would become insane and rush unchecked into every wickedness, the one against the other.

It is therefore possible for a man to depart from the order for which he was created, and when men generally act contrary to this order, there is danger of the destruction of the human race by the resulting evils. The Lord, however, guards against the evil increasing to such an extent that it will involve a general destruction. The tendency of evil is toward its own destruction; but the Lord guards and protects the good and provides for its final triumph.

Since there is a possibility of the growth and development of evil, which is contrary to the Divine order of creation, it is one of the functions of education to guard against the increase and growth of evil, as well as to promote the development of positive good.

Since there are degrees of the human mind and life, there must be the provision of the means for the development of all these planes of humanity in a true education, and there must be a balancing of their needs, lest one be developed at the expense of the other.

THE END OF CREATION

The great end or purpose for which man was created is "the kingdom of heaven, wherein the Divine may dwell with angels and men" (EU 4).

He who has been instructed in Divine Order, may moreover understand, that man was created to become an angel, because in him is the ultimate of

order, in which ultimate, whatever belongs to celestial and angelic wisdom may be formed, renewed and multiplied. Divine order never subsists in the mediate so as to form anything there without an ultimate, for it is not in its own fulness and perfection there, but proceeds to an ultimate; and when it is in its own ultimate, it then forms, and also by mediates there collated, renews and produces itself farther, which is brought about by procreations; wherefore the seminary of heaven is in the ultimate [LJ. 20]

The work of development not only of the physical but of the spiritual man, must be begun in this world. We cannot devote our energies wholly to material development, and expect after death to do the work of developing the soul. In this life and by a life here the mind must be formed in the body, and after death it can be built up on those lines of development only. As the chief end in Creation was the eternal life of man in heaven, and as the temporal and limited life here is only the preparation for that, we may see also that the chief end in all the work of education should be eternal life, not merely physical and worldly life. The principal end is heaven and heavenly life; the instrumental end is the body and the world in which the soul resides, and by the right use of which the mind is developed. All things of the natural world are mediate ends to promote the chief end, which is heaven. This we may see from the following :

All things Created from the Lord are uses; they are uses in the order, degree, and respect in which they have relation to man, and through man to the Lord from Whom they are. . . .

The end of the creation of the universe clearly shows what use is. The end of the creation of the universe is the existence of the angelic heaven; and as the angelic heaven is the end, man also or the human race is the end, since heaven is from it. From which it follows that all created things are mediate ends, and that these are uses in that order, degree and respect in which they have relation to man, and through man to the Lord.

Inasmuch as the end of creation is an angelic heaven out of the human race, and thus the human race itself, all other created things are mediate ends, and these as having relation to man, with a view to his conjunction with the Lord, refer themselves to these three things in him, *his body, his rational, and his spiritual*. For man cannot be conjoined with the Lord unless he be spiritual, nor can he be spiritual unless he be rational, nor can he be rational unless his body be in a sound state. These three are like a house, the body like the foundation; the rational like the superstructure, the spiritual like those things which are in the house, and conjunction with the Lord like dwelling in it. From this can be seen in what order, degree, and respect uses (which are the mediate ends of creation) have relation to man, namely, (1) for sustaining his body, (2) for perfecting his rational, (3) for receiving what is spiritual from the Lord. [DLW 327-330]

These three divisions of man's nature, the body, the rational, and the spiritual faculties show us clearly what are the ends by which the work of education must be directed. The body is the foundation on which the superstructure rests. It is an old adage that a sound mind must have a sound body on which to rest. There must be a true foundation. As the superstructure is to be eternal, and its upbuilding in right forms and order depend largely upon the development of a healthy body, we see the importance in the educational series, of the proper care and development of the human body. This work of care for the body begins with the very work of its formation before birth, and continues throughout life. In the age of infancy, proper care with suitable nourishment and training will go very far toward laying the foundation of a healthy system and one capable of hard work either physical or mental. But ignorance, carelessness, and neglect, frequently sow the seeds of disease, weakness, and even of death. "*The uses for sustaining the body* relate to its nourishment, its clothing, its habitation, its recreation and enjoyment, its protection and the preservation of its state" (see DLW 331). In considering the subject of education therefore the subject of the body and its development will need to be carefully studied and provided for, in order that the superstructure of the mind may have a firm foundation on which it may rest, and a perfect instrument through which it may operate, and above all that the work of constructing and upbuilding the immortal soul within may proceed under the most perfect and favorable conditions.

The education of the rational faculty. On the body as a foundation rests the higher human faculties. By means of the five senses of the body we gain a knowledge of the world, and acquire the sense of pleasure and delight from it. But these knowledges must be arranged in order, that they may serve as means of developing the rational faculty, by which we ascend from mere sense impressions and delights to a view of the connection and relation of things and their causes. In DLW 332 we read :

The uses for perfecting the rational are all things that give instruction about the subjects above mentioned, and are called sciences and branches of study, pertaining to the natural, economical, civil and moral affairs, which are learned by the aid of parents and teachers, or from books, or from intercourse with others, or by reflection on these subjects by oneself. These things perfect the rational so far as they are uses in a higher degree, and they are permanent so far as they are applied to life.

It will be noticed that all things of the world have a relationship to the body, and serve of use to it in a nearer or more remote manner ; for the uses of nourishment, clothing, habitation, etc. The material of the world serves of use to the material body, being on the same plane, and the body can be developed only by means of the things on its own plane. But the rational faculty is developed by means of the sciences and knowledges pertaining to natural and worldly things. From this it may be seen that the things of the world serve of use to the body and to the soul or mind, to the body by the actual use of the things themselves, and to the mind by the knowledge of the qualities, properties, relationships and causes of the things of nature and of human affairs. Thus the rational faculty is perfected by the interior things of nature. Education therefore in order to progress on true lines must be founded on the facts of nature ; but these facts must be arranged in the form of true science and instruction, by which the things of nature will be directed to the formation of right conceptions of the relation of things, and not be misdirected by fallacies and appearances.

The education of the spiritual faculties. Right education not only includes the training of the body and of the rational mind, but it also includes the right education of the spiritual faculties or of the spiritual mind. As the spiritual, the rational, and the body are compared to a house, its superstructure, and the things which are in the house, and the dwelling in the house to conjunction with the Lord, it may be seen that the most important things of education are not those pertaining to the body or even to the rational mind, thus not material things and sciences, important and necessary as these are, but the things pertaining to the development of the spiritual mind and to conjunction with the Lord ; because these are as it were the soul of the rational faculty and the body. There are also certain things by means of which the spiritual side of man is cultivated and developed. Thus for instance we read in DLW 333 :

The uses for receiving the spiritual from the Lord, are all things that belong to religion and to worship therefrom ; thus all things *that teach the acknowledgement and knowledge of God, and the knowledge and acknowledgement of good and truth, and thus eternal life, which are acquired in the same way as other learning, from parents, teachers, discourses, and books, and especially by applying to life what is learned, and in the Christian world, by doctrines and discourses from the Word, and through the Word from the Lord.* These uses in their whole extent may be classified under the same heads as the uses of the body are, as nourishment, clothing, habitation, recreation and enjoyment, protection and preservation of state,

if only these are applied to the soul, nutrition to goods of love, clothing to truths of wisdom, habitation to heaven, recreation and enjoyment to felicity of life and heavenly joy, protection to safety from infesting evils, and preservation of state to eternal life. All these things are given by the Lord according to the acknowledgement that all bodily things are also from the Lord, and that a man is only as a servant and house-steward appointed over the goods of his Lord.

From these things it may be seen that the soul of man is the real man, it is organized in a spiritual human form, and it has those things which feed, clothe and protect it; in fact it is a human organism in a higher form, which must be developed in a manner corresponding with that of the body, and the means for developing it are the goods and truths of the Word and the church which organize the soul into a true form, as the things of the material world organize his body.

It is also possible to distort and pervert the spiritual organism by false ideas and evil things, and therefore we may have a wrong education of the soul, by feeding it with distorted ideas of God, by denials of His existence, by the presentation of wrong ideals and motives, and by false conceptions of the nature of spiritual life. We may cultivate and develop the spiritual nature, or we may distort and pervert it through ignorance of its nature and its proper food and nourishment, or through vicious and evil principles and training. It is therefore of greatest importance that the educator of children and youth should have a true knowledge of the soul and its nature, and of the means by which it may be cultivated and developed. It is also certain that, as the child has a threefold nature the development of which is the work of the educator, he should be in the greatest freedom to apply this knowledge in the most practical manner, and in such a way as to secure the best results. As the real end of education is eternal life, and both the body and the rational are only subordinate means to promote this end, which may be interfered with or destroyed by wrong means, it seems most reasonable to conclude that in a perfect system of education the lower would be kept in correspondence with the higher, by providing that the higher wisdom should at least supervise the lower to the extent of having the power of preserving all three degrees in harmony and correspondence. At least it seems necessary, in view of the principles adduced, to review and thoroughly consider the wisdom of placing the principal work of education outside the control and influence of theology and religion.

In the past history of the world, human development has, for the most part, been one sided, and therefore imperfect. It has in many ages been directed solely to physical ends. When religion has controlled its movements, it has divorced education from reason and science, and oftentimes from true bodily development, as when monasticism taught to abandon the world and its pleasures. When philosophy has held the control, religion and theology and, frequently the facts of nature have been set aside, the result being a theoretical education producing a false rationality. Now however in these days a materialistic science is controlling education to the exclusion of theology and religion, and whilst a solid substructure of worldly facts may be acquired, agnosticism or ignorance of higher principles will not promote the best results in the development of the spiritual faculties of man.

The true philosophy of education will harmoniously cultivate all these planes of humanity, viz: the spiritual, the rational, and the physical. Not the spiritual alone makes the best education, for this is a castle in the air, a house without a foundation. Not the rational alone without the spiritual and the natural, for this is a visionary or theoretical set of imaginary notions, without a foundation in fact; nor yet a physical education alone without the spiritual and rational, for this is the mere cultivation of brute forces and powers, without the elevating and refining influences of reason and religion. Education must not abnegate the uses of worldly things, nor deny or reject their pleasures and delights. Education must not reject the rational investigations and conclusions of a true science and philosophy, nor must it reject the principles of theology which show the purposes and ends which all lower things subserve, in the Divine Ends from which they were created and made. All these must be brought together, systematized, harmonized, and reduced into a system working in unison for the development of all the planes of human life, spiritual, rational, and physical. This work *THE NEW PHILOSOPHY* contemplates, and will accomplish, when it is applied in a wise manner.

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