

SWEDENBORG AND ANCIENT PHILOSOPHY

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Swedenborg intensively read, noted, reflected upon, and made use of the ancient philosophers. From the early Greeks, such as Anaximander (fl. 546 B.C.), to the Roman statesman and dramatist Seneca (c. 3 B.C.–c. A.D. 65), several philosophers, scientists, and writers are referred to as “the ancients” in both the pre-theological and the theological works.¹ In fact we know from an unpublished manuscript (given the title *A Philosopher’s Notebook*) that Swedenborg summarized, quoted, and reflected upon many more topics from ancient thinkers than appear in his published works.² His graduate thesis, *Selected Sentences from L. Annaeus Seneca and Publius Syrus the Mime*, which he defended on June 1, 1709 at Uppsala University, shows what a comprehensive knowledge he had of classical authors.³

The subject of this essay is ancient and modern wisdom, especially concerning the existence and powers of the soul. Specifically, I will show three things. First, in both the theological and pre-theological works Swedenborg holds that the ancients are wiser than the moderns. Second, Swedenborg’s search for the soul led him to reevaluate his definition of philosophy and his conception of wisdom. Third, his revealing of ancient wisdom, especially the science of correspondences, is useful to today’s philosopher in understanding and appreciating ancient philosophical texts.

I

In the theological works, Swedenborg often uses the ancient philosophers to highlight the lack of wisdom in Christendom “at this day.” For example, in *Delights of Wisdom Relating to Married Love Followed by Pleasures of Insanity Relating to Licentious Love* (hereinafter *Married Love*), we find two narrative accounts which relate Swedenborg’s experiences with the ancient philosophers in heaven.⁴ Like St. John on the isle of Patmos,

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Swedenborg is also led “in the spirit” to a city in the spiritual world called “Athenaeum.”⁵ In and around the city live wise men of old from Greece, such as Pythagoras, Socrates, Aristippus, Xenophon, and Diogenes (*ML* 151r; 182). The city hosts gymnasia, where sages of old meet and learn from newcomers how wisdom on the earth has changed. Scholarly envoys are sent out from Athenaeum “to educated Christians to find out from them what people presently think about God, the creation of the universe, the immortality of the soul, the nature of man compared to the nature of animals, and other things which are matters of interior wisdom” (*ML* 151r). A herald announces that there will be an assembly because the envoys have returned with newcomers. So Swedenborg and his angel guide ascend a hill to an octagonal palace called the Palladium where two newcomers are ushered in before the assembly and asked: “What news do you have from earth?”

The newcomers report that some people who resemble beasts were found in a forest. They were lost or left in the forest when they were two or three years old and, consequently, they are unable to speak in words and do not know what things are edible and which are not. As a result of this discovery, some of the learned formed conjectures and conclusions about the nature of human beings compared to the nature of animals. The sages of old then ask to hear about the conjectures and conclusions. The newcomers reduce them to the following seven points:

1. By his own nature and also from birth, the human being is more stupid and thus worse off than any animal, and that is the way he turns out if he is not educated.
2. He can be educated because he learned how to make articulate sounds and thus to speak, and by that means began to express thoughts, and this gradually more and more, until he was able to formulate laws of society, though many of these laws are imprinted on animals from birth.
3. Animals have the same faculty of reason as human beings.
4. Therefore if animals could talk, they would reason on any subject as cleverly as human beings. It is an indication of their ability that they think in accordance with the same reason and prudence as human beings.

5. The intellect is no more than a modified form of light from the sun, aided by warmth, so that it is only an activity of interior nature, and this activity can be raised to the point that it appears as wisdom.
6. It is therefore vain to believe that a person lives after death any more than an animal . . .
7. Consequently religion, which teaches life after death, is an invention to keep simple people in bondage from within by its laws, as they are kept in bondage from without by laws of the state. (*ML* 151r)

The ancient philosophers are surprised at these conclusions, saying, “Oh, what the times are like on earth now! Alas, what changes wisdom has undergone! Has wisdom become ingenious nonsense?” (*ML* 152r) After giving a somewhat contrary analysis of the differences between human beings and animals based upon the report of the beast-like people found in the forest, the ancient philosophers draw their own conclusion about the clever modern Christians on earth:

We perceive from what you have said that wisdom today has become so nonexistent or nonsensical that people know nothing at all about the nature of the life of human beings compared to the nature of the life of animals. That is why they also do not know the nature of man’s life after death. Nevertheless, those who could know it, but do not wish to know it and therefore deny it, as many of your Christians do—we can liken them to the people found in the forest. Not that they have become that stupid from a lack of education; but by relying on misconceptions of the senses, which are dark shadows of truths, they have made themselves stupid. (*ML* 152r)

Touché! The ancient philosophers of heaven would agree with William Barrett that those who see the soul as a “ghost in the machine” of the universe or some computer have made themselves rather silly through their fantasies of science fiction and their inhuman metaphysics.⁶

The other narrative account in *Married Love* relates a similar experience. Swedenborg returns to the Palladium where three newcomers—a priest, a politician, and a philosopher—are again asked, “What news do you have from earth?” (*ML* 182) This time they report on people’s reaction

to Swedenborg's "novel ideas" about life after death, especially the idea that a person lives in the spiritual world the way he or she did in the natural world, except that the body is composed of spiritual, not material, substance. The priest says that members of his order reacted to Swedenborg's ideas by calling them hallucinations and fabrications. The members of the clergy continued to assert a physical resurrection only at the Last Judgment and not until then. The politician confesses that he did not believe in a life after death, and that Swedenborg's reports of the life after death were fictions. The philosopher admits that he, too, did not believe in a life after death and that he classed these new ideas about the spirit with other opinions and conjectures he had gathered from ancient and modern sources. Here is how the ancient philosophers respond:

The sages were dumbfounded at hearing this; and those who were of the Socratic school said they perceived from this news from earth that the inner faculties of human minds had become gradually closed, with faith in falsity now shining like truth in the world, and clever foolishness like wisdom. Since our times, they said, the light of wisdom has descended from the inner regions of the brain to the mouth beneath the nose, where it appears to view as a brilliance of the lips, and the speech of the mouth therefore as wisdom.

Listening to this, one of the novices there said, "Yes, and how stupid the minds of earth's inhabitants are today! If only we had here the disciples of Heraclitus who weep over everything and the disciples of Democritus who laugh at everything. What great weeping and laughing we would hear then!" (ML 182)

The inclusion of these accounts concerning experiences at the Palladium in the Athenaeum of the spiritual world suits a reader's expectations. When one opens a book entitled *Delights of Wisdom Relating to Married Love*, one is not surprised to find narrative accounts of ancient Greek philosophers, for people often associate the sages of ancient Greece and Rome with wisdom. Yet these spiritual experiences are repeated in Swedenborg's last work, *The True Christian Religion*.⁷ The material between the chapters on baptism and the holy supper consists of memorable relations taken from previous works, such as *Married Love* and *The Interaction*

of the Soul and Body.⁸ The theme of these memorable relations is the soul, specifically modern ignorance and stupidity concerning the human soul and its immortality in contrast to the wisdom of the ancients. Certainly a book on Christianity should include the human soul and its immortality, but it is rather embarrassing for modern European Christians to have the ancient philosophers lecture them on such spiritual subjects. However, as we will see, this is not uncommon in the theological works.

In *Angelic Wisdom Concerning the Divine Providence*, Swedenborg explains that the purpose of creation is a heaven from the human race.⁹ To this end, he makes the following assertions: every person is created to live forever; every person is created to live forever in a state of happiness; thus every person is created that he or she may enter heaven, and the Divine Love cannot do otherwise than desire this, and the Divine Wisdom cannot do otherwise than provide for it (*DP* 323). While explaining the first assertion, Swedenborg observes that

The sages or wise men of old perceived that the mind of man cannot die; for they said, How can spirit or mind die when it can exercise wisdom? Few men at the present day know what they interiorly understood by this: but there was an idea which descended from heaven into their general perception that God is Wisdom itself which man shares; and God is immortal or eternal. (*DP* 324:3)

This statement is followed by quotations from the Bible on the life after death and other considerations of immortality. Like the passages from *Married Love* and *True Christian Religion*, the point here is that modern Christians are not as wise as the ancients and that the moderns have forgotten, or are skeptical toward, what their ancestors once knew about the soul. We find the same idea advanced in the *Arcana Coelestia*¹⁰:

When a man is being elevated towards interior things, he comes out of the gross sensuous light into a milder light, and at the same time is withdrawn from the influx of scandalous and filthy things, and is brought nearer to the things that belong to what is just and fair, because nearer to the angels who are with him, thus nearer to the light of heaven. This elevation from sensuous things was known to the ancients, even to the

gentiles, and, therefore, when the soul is withdrawn from sensuous things, their wise men said that it comes into interior light, and at the same time into a tranquil state, and into a kind of heavenly bliss; and from this they also concluded that the soul is immortal. (AC 6313)

Again, this knowledge of the soul and wisdom of the ancients is contrasted with the ignorance and foolishness of the moderns. A few passages later Swedenborg writes that the sciences in the learned world are means of becoming wise, but also of becoming insane. When modern scholars are raised to honors, they live more sensuously than the simple; “and they then believe it to be a mark of simplicity to attribute anything to the Divine, and not to prudence and nature, and everything else to chance” (AC 6317). Rare is the graduate student who has not encountered this sort of professor in the universities of the West. Indeed, they constitute the majority of the learned.

When we look back to Swedenborg’s earlier works, our findings are similar. In *The Word Explained*, Swedenborg bemoans the ignorance concerning the soul that reigns in the learned world.¹¹ In his 1742 work, *Rational Psychology*, Swedenborg observes that the “wise gentiles, as can be seen from Greek authors, the Sophi, Plato, Aristotle, and from Cicero” all believed in the immortality of the soul.¹² Moreover, Pythagoras, Socrates, Plato, and others have endeavored to describe the state of the soul, its happiness or torments, after the death of the body (*R. Psych.* 511, 548). In a slightly earlier work, *The Economy of the Animal Kingdom*, we find Swedenborg using quotations from Aristotle and Cicero on the immortality of the soul (2 *EAK* 248–50, 349). It is also in these volumes that we find Swedenborg addressing the controversy over the achievements of the ancients versus the moderns.

In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries a very famous and long-drawn-out dispute agitated much of the learned world. According to Gilbert Highet, “it is now remembered under the satiric titles of LA QUERELLE DES ANCIENS ET DES MODERNS and THE BATTLE OF THE BOOKS.”¹³ The question under discussion was, generally speaking, are the moderns more advanced than the ancient Greeks and Romans? Or are the moderns half-taught barbarians using the arts of the truly civilized

ancients? Swedenborg is reluctant to enter the fray, for he begins by saying that “I think that I shall not at all detract from the literature of the present day, if I aver with many, that the ancients surpassed us in wisdom, in the art and perfection of distinguishing things, and in the shrewdness of their conjectures respecting the occult” (1 EAK 23). He then lists the names Aristotle, Hippocrates, Galen, Archimedes, and Euclid. Yet in the next paragraph he says:

On the other hand, I think I shall not detract from the praise due to ancient literature, if again with many I aver, that the late and present ages are distinguished above those of the ancients for the aids they have afforded in carrying to a further extent the developments of genius, or for accumulating experimental facts; thus for supplying posterity, of *whom we have the brightest hopes, with materials for a wisdom that is yet to come.* (1 EAK 24)

This evaluation of the ancients and the moderns is quite consistent with the one given in the theological works. Swedenborg admits that the ancients were wiser and that “for ages the human mind lay slumbering in darkness,” but he hopes that the dawn of a new day is near (1 EAK 25). Later in this work he observes that over the centuries human behavior changes from what is consistently decorous, right, and honorable, to the inconsistently decorous and honorable. We fall from “the internal to the external, and from the center to the surface; and this to such an extent, that the very essential of humanity is reckoned to consist in the power to mimic virtues by forms, and to make mere utility pass under the guise of honor and honesty . . .” (2 EAK 326). This hint that modern people are external, superficial, and pragmatic coheres with the way that he praises the ancient philosophers for having wisdom regarding interior things, such as God, the soul, and the life after death. Swedenborg, like Anthony O’Hear today (in *After Progress*), accepts the superiority of the moderns in the sciences and technology, but maintains that this does not make the moderns wiser than the ancients.¹⁴ Wisdom, as Swedenborg was led to realize, is not the same as science, factual knowledge, or skillful reasoning—especially when put to use in serving the modern autonomous self.

II

I say, “led to realize” because in Swedenborg’s early cosmological work, *The Principia or First Principles of Natural Things* (1734), he equates wisdom with the desire to know the causes of objects and investigate the secret things of nature.¹⁵ He also defines philosophy as “the knowledge of the mechanism of our world . . .” (*Pr.* 2). Furthermore, “man is distinguished from brutes by reason alone; in other respects we are mere animals and organized forms” (*Pr.* 10). This sounds rather cold and worldly. However, it is not meant to imply that wisdom and philosophy confine us to nature, our senses, and reason alone. On the contrary, Swedenborg is very clear that a wise person lifts his or her thoughts above the senses, that we should not rest in reason alone, but cultivate a love for the Deity, for “true philosophy and contempt for the Deity are two opposites” (*Pr.* 38). Indeed, he asserts that materialists and pantheists have not even reached the threshold of true philosophy (*Pr.* 39) and this conviction only grows stronger throughout his life. At this point though, he defines the true philosopher as the man who is able to “arrive at the real causes and knowledge of those things in the mechanical world which are invisible and remote from the senses; and who is afterwards capable of reasoning a priori, or from first principles or causes, concerning the world and its phenomena . . .” (*Pr.* 35). But see how his definition of philosophy changes. What it means to be a philosopher—a lover of wisdom—deepens as he matures and his eyes are opened to the world of the spirit.

For example, while Swedenborg engrossed himself in anatomy and physiology during his search for the seat of the soul, he wrote on the subject of rational psychology, or philosophical care for the psyche. In the *Rational Psychology* of 1742 we find a different description of philosophy. Swedenborg maintains that there is a part of the mind he calls the “pure intellect” and that its form is born of the essential determinations of the soul. It is an intellect above the senses and thought, but below the soul. This intellect is present in every sentence. Even a child, in a short space of time, speaks philosophically, dialectically, logically, and grammatically, “more perfectly than the whole peripatetic and Pythagorean school speaks artificially and scientifically” (*R. Psych.* 129). This is why the only way to learn genuine philosophy is from an inner examination of our own thoughts.

He maintains that inmosty within us there must be a pure intellect which “prescribes to the several operations of the mind, rules and laws which are equally concealed from us, as the form of the brain, heart, stomach, is concealed from one who has not yet examined those organs” (ibid.). This is a much more reflective and introspective description of philosophy than the one offered in *The Principia*. Then, Swedenborg goes one step further: “Philosophical science is, therefore, the anatomy of a mind, the healing whereof is also its subject of inquiry” (ibid.). Now we see the development of a man from a scientific cosmologist to a humanitarian philosopher, and from thence to a theologian and revelator (yes, development—contrary to the scheme pushed by Comte and the positivists).¹⁶ For Swedenborg, the goal of the modern philosopher is similar to that of the ancient philosophers, one so brilliantly and affectionately expounded by Pierre Hadot in his *Philosophy as a Way of Life*.¹⁷

When we come to the theological works, we find that, as we have seen, the ancient philosophers, in contrast to the modern, are praised for their wisdom. However, this praise is refined and qualified. When Swedenborg goes to the heavenly Athenaeum the first time, he asks about Plato and Aristotle. The angel tells him that they and their followers live in another region of heaven “because they taught matters of reason having to do with the intellect, while the ones here [Pythagoras, Socrates et al.] taught matters of morality having to do with life” (ML 151r). When Swedenborg visits Athenaeum the second time, some visitors inquire after Demosthenes and Epicurus. The visitors are told that Demosthenes is with Plato, and that Epicurus “lives at the border at the west [a direction furthest from God], and he does not come to join us either, because we draw a distinction between good affections and evil ones . . .” (ML 182). So it is the ancient philosophers who concentrated on teaching morality and living a good life above all that are singled out for praise. This is not to say that Plato and Aristotle had nothing to do with morality and the good life; plainly, they did. Yet their philosophy shows that they were sometimes interested in matters of reason simply for the sake of the intellect, and this difference in attention was enough to cause them to live in their own heavenly city. (Although there is obviously camaraderie between the two, for after the Pythagoreans and Socratics try to explain the mystery of the

fall of humanity from a good state into an evil one, it is the explanation of “a certain Platonist” that prevails [ML 153r].)

In *Married Love* real philosophy, that is, genuine love of wisdom, is the unselfish affection for living rationally according to truths, so that wisdom is formed by concepts, reason, and life together (ML 130). We are becoming wise when good and truth are matters of reason first and consequently of life; but we have genuine wisdom when they have become matters of life first and consequently of reason. Despite the fact that Aristotle spoke hoarsely to Swedenborg when they met in heaven, Swedenborg reports that he also spoke sensibly and he praises the ancient Greek thinker because he thought from life (AC 4658). Aristotle’s followers (the Scholastics), by contrast, are criticized for blindly following Aristotle and for attempting to reason toward life in very artificial modes—making philosophy consist in a life of reflection, rather than in a reflective life. As Swedenborg wrote:

The most ancient people in this world did not acknowledge any other wisdom than wisdom of life. This was the wisdom of those who were formerly called sages. The ancients, however, who came after those most ancient people, recognized as wisdom a wisdom of reason, and they were called philosophers. But today, many even call knowledge wisdom; for the educated, the learned, and the merely knowledgeable are called wise. Thus wisdom has fallen from its peak to its valley. (ML 130)

Here we have an even larger context in which to view Swedenborg’s praise of the ancient philosophers over the modern. It turns out that, wise as the ancients were relative to the moderns, even they were not as wise as the people before them, the most ancients. Though the most ancients did not have philosophy or a wisdom of reasoning, they were superior to the ancients in the art of living a good life, both in their inner lives as well as in their external relations with others. This is why Socrates and some other Presocratic thinkers are esteemed above Plato and Aristotle.

III

This estimation of the Presocratics is rather different than the one frequently presented in contemporary textbooks. For example, *A Presocratics*

Reader (1995) lauds the early Greek thinkers for their “understanding the importance and usefulness of rational inquiry and the critical evaluation of arguments and evidence” and their commitment to a new view “about the nature of justification.”¹⁸ In other words, it does not laud them for their insights into living the good life and their wisdom regarding the human condition. Instead, they are to be respected for their intellectual processes and for being proto-scientists. In fact, unlike earlier textbooks in ancient philosophy, such as Bakewell’s *Source Book in Ancient Philosophy* (1907, revised 1939),¹⁹ the *Reader* contains neither excerpts from the religio-moralistic “Golden Words” of the Pythagoreans nor even a hint of their existence.²⁰

Of course this evaluation of the Presocratics as proto-scientists is not shared by everyone. While Jonathan Barnes maintains that in some ways the Presocratics were great scientists, he also rejects the notion that Anaximenes was a Presocratic Boyle or Pythagoras an ancient Newton.²¹ But his overall attitude toward them is that of other modern philosophers who are infatuated with science and who regard most everything else as worthless. I agree that some of the Pythagorean arithmology is, as Barnes says, inane and jejune. Yet some Pythagorean mystical “mumbo-jumbo” (such as justice is 4) only *appears* to be unintelligible. To those who do not read the sayings literally or to those who are not ignorant of the ancient science of correspondences (or what we might today call an organic system of spiritual-natural symbols), the number symbolism of the Pythagoreans is neither inane nor jejune. In a criticism of the Pythagorean Philolaus, Barnes asks: “does 4 determine a quadrilateral or a tetrahedron?”²² Readers of the Writings know that 4 determines a quadrilateral, and not just any one, but specifically a square. How? Let us consult a passage from *The Apocalypse Revealed*:²³

Verse 16. And the city [New Jerusalem] lieth four-square, signifies justice in it. The reason why the city was seen “four-square,” is, because “a quadrangle,” or “a square,” signifies what is just, for “a triangle” signifies what is right, all these in the ultimate degree, or the natural. “A quadrangle,” or “a square,” signifies what is just because it has four sides, and the four sides look towards the four quarters, and to look equally towards the four quarters, is to respect all things from justice; for which reason

three gates opened into the city from each quarter, and it is said in Isaiah: “Open ye the gates, that a just nation which keepeth faithfulness, may enter in (xxvi. 2).” “The city lieth four-square,” that the length and breadth thereof might be equal, and by “length” is signified the good of that church, and by “breadth” its truth, and when good and truth are equal, then there is what is just. It is owing to this signification of “a square,” that in common discourse a man is said to be “square,” who is a man that does not from injustice incline either to this or that party. (905)

So we see that when the Pythagoreans were asserting that “things are numbers,” including the idea that “justice is 4,” and representing this with four pebbles laid in a square, they were (contra the frustrated Aristotelians) correct. The Pythagoreans had contact with the Ancient Church (the church preceding the Hebrews) and its revelation (either orally or in writing) and they acquired some understanding of the ancient science of correspondences. Barnes relates the story about how a Pythagorean, Eurytus, used to set out some pebbles and say that “*this* is the number of man, *this* of horse,” and so on. He calls this “puerile” but refrains from a wholesale condemnation of Eurytus because this is also the “first scrabbling essay towards a quantitative and mathematically-based science.”²⁴ For today’s naturalist, the leap toward modern science saves the Pythagoreans from the dustbin of history!

Barnes seems oblivious to the possibility that Eurytus had inherited a system of symbols that was, even for him, ancient wisdom only half understood, and that his setting out some pebbles in various shapes during his lecture was part of his teaching methodology, a visual mnemonic device for the novitiates. Moreover, Barnes does not consider that this way of learning the correspondences of things (the symbol system) was part of their religion, their philosophy as a way of life, not just dogmatic speculations. W.K.C. Guthrie’s advice that “we cannot hope to understand Pythagorean thought if we allow ourselves to forget that it too was primarily religious” is quite sensible from a Swedenborgian standpoint.²⁵

It is a pity that Guthrie describes F.M. Cornford’s explanation of Pythagorean numerology as “unwarrantably favourable,” because Cornford was on the right track. Cornford, like Swedenborg before him,

even relates the misunderstanding of the Pythagoreans, then as now, to a literal-minded approach: "the square figure [4] is a symbol which represents or embodies the nature of fairness, just as when an honest man was called 'four-square without reproach' no one imagined that his figure really had four corners."²⁶ Guthrie remarks that even if this explanation makes some sense out of the idea that things are, or imitate, numbers, it does not account for the conception of justice as extended in space, that is, being in a certain quarter. Yet he ingeniously follows this up with the thought that the Pythagorean teaching may be elucidated by comparing it with the Love and Strife of Empedocles, "which he conceived as sharing the cosmic sphere with the four elements, 'equal in length and breadth'."²⁷ Just so. As we have seen from *The Apocalypse Revealed* passage above, "length" refers to good and "breadth" refers to truth and when these are conjoined and there is no imbalance between them, justice results (good loves + true ideas in proper proportion = just actions). Justice is related to the symbol of the balance and to the ideas of equality and impartiality. This is due to the fact that, in a realist theory, good and truth look equally to the four quarters of, not the natural world, but the spiritual world where space is a manifestation of spiritual state of mind (relative to God). We mortals then find spacio-temporal ways to express this experienced reality using natural language and teaching methods.

This example illustrates how the theological works of Swedenborg provide the tools needed for a revised understanding of the ancient philosophers. Not that a religious, or Christian, approach to the sages of the past has never been tried, but that with the knowledge of correspondences revealed as part of the New Jerusalem, a new and more detailed history of the ancient philosophers awaits explication and application.

It is interesting that in *The Principia*, Swedenborg expresses his intuition that from the time of the most ancients down to the modern era, much has been lost (*Pr.* 37–8). He seems to equate this loss with a lack of scientific knowledge and predictability. In the theological works, by contrast, it is clear that what was lost was a knowledge of the science of correspondences, and the wisdom of life associated with that knowledge. It is hoped that with the recovery of this knowledge, wisdom will be reborn. Of course this is dependent upon our choosing to lift our eyes and hearts to God and to live the virtues of the good life. □

ENDNOTES

1. Emanuel Swedenborg, *The Economy of the Animal Kingdom*, trans. Augustus Clissold (New York: The New Church Press Inc., reproduced by the Swedenborg Scientific Association, 1955), paragraph 605. Subsequent references to this work will be abbreviated by a number indicating the first or second part of the work and the letters *EAK* and given parenthetically citing the paragraph number. Emanuel Swedenborg, *The Doctrine of the New Jerusalem concerning the Sacred Scripture*, trans. W.C. Dick (London: The Swedenborg Society, 1954): § 115.

2. Emanuel Swedenborg, *A Philosopher's Notebook*, trans. Alfred Acton (Philadelphia, PA: Swedenborg Scientific Association, 1931).

3. Emanuel Swedenborg, *Selected Sentences from L. Annaeus Seneca and Publius Syrus the Mime*, trans. Alfred Acton, revised and edited by Beryl G. Briscoe (Bryn Athyn, PA: Swedenborg Scientific Association, 1967).

4. Emanuel Swedenborg, *Delights of Wisdom Relating to Married Love followed by Pleasures of Insanity Relating to Licentious Love*, trans. N. Bruce Rogers (Bryn Athyn, PA: General Church of the New Jerusalem, 1995). Subsequent references to this work will be abbreviated *ML* and given parenthetically citing the paragraph number.

5. In other words, just as St. John was in the spirit on the Lord's day (John 1:10 RSV) and saw and heard many things in the spiritual world, so did Swedenborg.

6. William Barrett, *Death of the Soul: From Descartes to the Computer* (New York: Doubleday, 1986): 163–6.

7. Emanuel Swedenborg, *The True Christian Religion*, trans. John Chadwick (London: The Swedenborg Society, 1988): §§ 692–5.

8. Emanuel Swedenborg, *The Interaction of the Soul and Body*, no translator given (London: The Swedenborg Society, 2001): § 19.

9. Emanuel Swedenborg, *Angelic Wisdom concerning the Divine Providence*, trans. W.C. Dick and E.J. Pulsford (London: The Swedenborg Society, 1949). Subsequent references to this work will be abbreviated *DP* and given parenthetically citing the paragraph number.

10. Emanuel Swedenborg, *Arcana Coelestia*, trans. J.F. Potts (London: The Swedenborg Society, 1976). Subsequent references to this work will be abbreviated *AC* and given parenthetically citing the paragraph number.

11. Emanuel Swedenborg, *The Word Explained*, trans. Alfred Acton (Bryn Athyn, PA: Academy of the New Church, 1927): § 927.

12. Emanuel Swedenborg, *Rational Psychology*, trans. Norbert H. Rogers and Alfred Acton (Philadelphia, PA: Swedenborg Scientific Association, 1950): § 511. Subsequent references to this work will be abbreviated *R.Psych.* and given parenthetically citing the paragraph number.

13. Gilbert Highet, *The Classical Tradition* (London: Oxford University Press, 1949): 261.

14. Anthony O'Hear, *After Progress: Finding the Old Way Forward* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 1999).

15. Emanuel Swedenborg, *The Principia or The First Principles of Natural Things*, trans. James R. Rendell and Isaiah Tansley (London: The Swedenborg Society, 1912). Subsequent references to this work will be abbreviated *Pr.* and given parenthetically citing the page number of the first volume.

16. The French philosopher Auguste Comte (1798–1857) proclaimed the “law” of the development of human intelligence to consist of three stages: the theological, or fictitious; the metaphysical, or abstract; and the scientific, or positive.

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17. Pierre Hadot, *Philosophy as a Way of Life*, ed. Arnold I. Davidson and trans. Michael Chase (Oxford: Blackwell, 1995).

18. *A Presocratics Reader*, ed. Patricia Curd and trans. Richard D. McKirahan, Jr. (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett, 1995): 7, 1.

19. Charles M. Bakewell, *Source Book in Ancient Philosophy* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1907).

20. This criticism of the *Reader* also applies to the much larger volume, *Philosophy Before Socrates* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1994), from the same publisher and translator.

21. Jonathan Barnes, *The Presocratic Philosophers*, rev. ed. (London: Routledge, 1982), 52, 46, 101.

22. Barnes, 391.

23. Emanuel Swedenborg, *The Apocalypse Revealed*, trans. John Whitehead (New York: Swedenborg Foundation, 1975).

24. Barnes, 390–91.

25. W.K.C. Guthrie, *A History of Greek Philosophy*, vol. 1 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1962), 231.

26. Guthrie, 304.

27. Guthrie, 305.