

## SPACE AND SPIRITUAL EXTENSE

HUGO L.J. ODHNER

The Writings often warn us that while the thought of man is always connected with ideas of space and time, we can and must as far as possible abstract these limiting notions when seeking to grasp the nature of the spiritual world (DLW 69, 51, 7, 81, 111, 155f, 300, etc.).

In his valuable studies of Space published in the *NEW PHILOSOPHY* for 1957, Dr. C. R. Pendleton is particularly concerned to explain the nature of spiritual substance in such a way as to make it easier to understand how the spatial matter of the natural world could have been created out of spiritual substances. The solution he suggests is that spiritual substance also has a trace of spatial qualities—in the form of “tridimensionality,” which, he considers, is not space in the ordinary sense (pages 162, 171, 226). Being deeply interested in this problem, my effort in reading his articles has been to see what the writer really means by this term, “tridimensionality.” Its ordinary meaning would be “the quality of possessing or appearing in three dimensions.” It was my hope that the reference was to the *appearance* of things in the spiritual world, since the Writings universally teach that all spiritual objects appear like those on earth—appear as if in space and in relative dimensions. But Dr. Pendleton seems to teach that the substance itself of the spiritual world is composed of entities so small and so active (p. 235) that they cannot be said to enclose a space or to occupy a space (p. 219–220, 226). “The units of the spiritual atmospheres,” he states, “and the units of the natural atmospheres, are *small in the same physical way*” (pp. 231ff, 235; italics mine). This is equivalent to saying that the three dimensions which they possess are physical dimensions. He further claims that the Writings teach that the “substantial extense” of the spiritual world “is composed of very minute active substance,” which he has just described as physically small.

The creation of the spiritual or prior world proceeds by discrete degrees from the primitives of the spiritual sun through three atmospheres down to their spiritual ultimates or “substances at rest” (TCR 33, 76; Ang. Idea; DLW 302). Discrete degrees are

formed by successive composition (DLW 195, 190; LJ post. 307). If the spiritual primitives from which they arise were physically small, their compositions would be physically larger, and the result would inevitably be a spiritual world every bit as spatial as the natural world. Such a grotesque spatial picture would be called up if we should claim that "it is the lack of fixed points, not the lack of three dimensions, which makes measurements impossible in the spiritual world" (p. 238) and makes it "impossible to have any accurate knowledge of the sizes of things in the spiritual world" (p. 239). For this makes the essence of the two worlds the same, whereas the Writings show that while they resemble each other in appearance, they are utterly different as to essence (DLW 90, 163).

The monistic interpretation of the Writings is responsible for a mistranslation: Endeavoring to show that spiritual substances become natural by a gradual increase of inertia, Dr. Pendleton translates AE 1218 as saying that "the dying [*sic*] which comes to the spiritual in nature does not make it real but diminishes it" (p. 240). But the word *mortuum* does not mean "dying" but "dead." The dead matter from the natural sun, added as a clothing for the spiritual when this descends into nature, certainly takes away from reality. But the dead element with its physical inertia does not begin in the spiritual sun. It is "superinduced" from the natural sun as from "a secondary origin" (AE 1218).

The substance of heaven is not a less inert natural. I submit that such a concept is based on an entire misinterpretation of the doctrinal passages, and neglects to take into account several teachings, some of which I shall cite. That the *physical* universe is made up out of minute active substances none can well dispute, although their nature remains uncertain even at the end of such careful studies as Dr. Pendleton's. But that a universe made up of such subtle forms of *motion* can be called a "spiritual world" or a "spiritual extense"—or that they can be identified with the living substance which makes the human spirit—is to me utterly incomprehensible. For no matter how small an entity is, or how fast it spins, this does not make it spiritual. So to think savors of the false notion that "the interior activity of nature is life" (TCR 35: 10).

## SPIRITUAL DIMENSIONS

The question revolves, of course, around our concept of spiritual dimensions. That spiritual things appear in three dimensions is easily recognized from the fact that all the objects of our imagination—the objects of internal sight—so appear. Our ideas are interrelated by mediating ideas into fields of associations represented in concepts of apparent space, and in sequences of states which answer to progressions of time. Yet there is no space or physical extension in the *mind* of man, and no localizations of ideas in the physical brain; even though the actuation of the nerve tissues is needed to make the man on earth conscious of his ideations. Our mental objects can transect each other in innumerable planes without confusion or interference. Our thoughts can be ordered into categories and degrees variously represented. Similarly, in the spiritual world, quite apart from the dimensional appearances of the objects, every created thing seen or felt is distinguished not only by discrete degrees but also by continuous degrees, that is, degrees of more or less. An affection is more or less active, more or less ardent, more or less pure. An angel is more or less wise, perfect or useful. We do not measure love in ounces or wisdom by the yard. But there are spiritual dimensions which effectively measure character and virtue, wisdom and intelligence, and define the relations of each spiritual being to others and to the Lord. In order to convey these variations of spiritual perfections and limitations, there is the “appearance of space” in the spiritual world; and this is necessary so “that one thing may be distinguished from another” (TCR 29). The appearances of space in the other life are indeed “real appearances” since they are constant as long as the states they represent endure. But in fact they are not appearances of space at all, but appearances of states of wisdom and perception, and are so understood by the angels (Wis. vii. 5: 2).

The spiritual relations which such apparent spaces represent are not relations of the states of natural substances, but of the states of reception of life, thus the relations of spiritual substances and subjects. Such relations are based on the underlying “spiritual extense” in which angels are positioned relative to each other according to their reception of the Divine influx. This extense is “spiritual” space, and has nothing in common with the “material spaces” or material extenses of the natural world. But they are

the spiritual equivalent of the space we know of. Therefore the Writings can in the same paragraph assert that "in the spiritual world there are not material spaces" and add that "that whole world . . . where spirits and angels dwell might be drawn through the eye of a needle or concentrated on the point of a single hair . . . if there were no substantial extense there. . . . Spaces and times limit all and single things in both worlds" (TCR 29).

What kind of space there is in the spiritual world is indeed explained, but not in terms of natural dimensions :

"There is a trinal dimension of all things on earth, but *such dimensions cannot be predicated of celestial and spiritual things*. When they are predicated there is understood, abstractedly from dimensions, a greater or lesser perfection, thus its quality and quantity . . ." (AC 650 [Italics added]). By dimensions "are perceived states" (AC 4482).

All things in both worlds consist of discrete degrees and at the same time of continuous degrees, and these are signified by the dimensions of height and breadth, although their visible position (*situs*) does not alter the designation (DLW 185). In heaven "length" means a state of good, "breadth" a state of truth, etc. (HH 197). "Spaces in heaven are nothing other than external states corresponding to the internal states" (HH 193). The distance or spiritual relation between two societies may thus appear long or short to different angels, "although it is the same." The intermediate steps, or necessary changes of state, are what differ. Hence a notion or idea of space cannot enter their thought, "although with them there are spaces equally as in the world" (HH 195). "They have no spaces . . ." (HH 192); yet they have a perceptual or mental space, which is not the appearance of the relations of natural objects—as in the case of our sensations—but the appearance of states of life. Hence "spaces there cannot be measured as in the world, but can be seen only from state and according to the state of their interiors" (HH 198). Obviously, it is not physical spaces that are thus seen "from state"! Spiritual things are seen and measured, but by spiritual standards which are of love and wisdom, or "by a spiritual idea" (DLW 7). We cannot reconcile this with the theory advanced in this journal (1957, p. 238) that "it is the lack of fixed points, not the lack of dimensions, which makes measurements impossible in the spiritual world."

## SPIRITUAL EXTENSE

The statement just cited was made in connection with a comment that Einstein's concept of Relativity has "practically destroyed all idea of fixed and measurable space" even in this our own tridimensional world (p. 238). While Swedenborg indeed often speaks of space in either world as a relation between objects and as measurable only by distinct intermediate things, it is striking that the Relativity theory has to do with things as viewed by a finite observer in a state of motion, and does not concern itself with things as they are in themselves, or in the view of an infinite observer who sees all things simultaneously. Angels and spirits, like men, are finite observers and can never make absolute judgments in measuring spiritual states. But the underlying reality of the spiritual world is the Divine truth. It is the Divine truth proceeding that makes the whole pattern of that world, and reveals the true relations of all spiritual states under the appearances of changes in "space" and "time," or in phenomenal and conceptual forms. Therefore we are told that in the other world "all places wherever they are are appearances of Divine truth in ultimates. Divine truth in ultimates appears in forms such as those of nature, and all places variously receive the Divine truth . . ." (SD 5363f). It is the relative locations of the heavens and the hells that are here discussed. The ultimates of Divine truth are the whole field of potential spiritual uses which is otherwise described as the Divine-spiritual man, or as "the expanse of the center of life"—which is "not an extense" but still in the extense of the natural world by influx and according to correspondence or reception in forms and states (TCR 35: 11).

The spiritual world is therefore an extense only in the sense that it extends itself, without reference to space. The Divine truth, which is the one and only substantial (AC 7004: 2), is "the inmost of the spiritual world" and is also that "from which nature took its origin"; indeed it is the very substance and reality of the whole universe (Ath. 145, cp. 68).

We cannot form any coherent concept of the spiritual world without some kind of extense, for only by ideas of extense can we distinguish one thing from another. The extension of Divine truth is a spiritual pattern into which every thing fits. Without such a concept of substantial but non-spatial extense we would think absurdly about the spiritual realm—perchance as something

that could "be drawn through the eye of a needle" or be balanced on the point of a hair; thus as something infinitesimally small as to space! (TCR 29). Smallness of size can certainly not explain the absence of material spaces.

It would be equally erroneous to think of the spiritual world as a haphazard compound of human and angelic ideas. For it is the ordered complex of human states seen in the light of the Divine truth and relative to it. It is "in accordance with the Lord's presence" that spaces appear in that world. This is what determines the wisdom and "extension of thought" of the angels and their communications. And through this they have the ability to "think spiritually, and not naturally as do men" (HH 199).

#### THE SPIRITUAL NOT A PURER NATURAL

Throughout Dr. Pendleton's papers there is the underlying thought that Swedenborg's system was "essentially monistic" (pp. 175, 177). If by "monism" is meant the acknowledgment that the Divine is the only substance which requires nothing but itself in order to exist, then even Descartes must be classed as a "monist." But the term "dualism" is generally used to describe the concept of two created substances, one spiritual and one natural; although in later times it has often been applied to a dualism of process rather than of substance.

In his early treatises, Swedenborg, under the Cartesian influence active in the Upsala University and in line with the mechanistic thinking of Polhem, reacted hotly against scholastic dogmatism, and fought for the idea that the world was purely geometrical and that the body of man as well as of animal was a mechanism. He was, however, impatient with the barren ideas which Descartes had of the soul as abstract thought. Could not the "spirit" also be a natural substance, a mechanism? As his own philosophy developed, the need for a superior substance for the soul and mind led him to conceive of a finer natural organism which could survive death. Yet even this did not fulfil the living functions of the soul or spirit; and he gradually came to stress that the spirit is "spiritual" even as to substance, even though it depended for its survival and permanent individuation on such a "limbus" from the inmosts of nature as he had previously called "the soul" or "the spirituous fluid."

In the theological Writings the distinction between spiritual and natural substance is made as clear as natural language can make it. Swedenborg blames the failure of the philosophers on an ignorance of what the spiritual is, and on their specific fallacy of regarding the spiritual as "a purer natural."

We must indeed recognize that the spiritual is purer—a purer substance—than the natural. But we are continually warned against the idea that the spiritual is a finer, purer, more tenuous (*tenué*) natural, or that spiritual things "are nothing but pure natural ones . . ." (Infl. 9, 17; DLW 350; TCR 695: 3, 280: 2). This fallacious concept is common with those who "have an idea of successives as continuous" instead of discrete (AC 10099: 4). Compare the system of Leibnitz, based on the principle of Continuity. Contrast this with the statements that the difference between the spiritual and the natural is not like that between what is pure and what is less pure, but like that of the prior and the posterior, or like the cause and the effect, "between which no finite ratio is possible" (CL 326: 2). Thus "the natural can never through subtilization approximate to the spiritual so as to become it" (TCR 280: 2).

What, then, are the "discrete" differences between the two? If we should simply refine the natural substance, I can imagine that we would arrive at just such a substance as Dr. Pendleton describes. It would have size, but insignificantly small; motion, but inconceivably fast; extense, but one "composed of very minute active substances"; limits, but non-measurable ones. In short, we would have just that kind of substance which Swedenborg, in his philosophical works, tried to describe as the first of *nature*. Indeed, Dr. Pendleton states of the "first natural point" that "its size may be found by dividing something small again and again until the final division, the natural point, is reached" (p. 234). If we should identify this point in any way with the unit of spiritual substance, what do we do but derive the spiritual by "subtilization" of the natural?

#### A PHILOSOPHIC CONCEPT OF THE SPIRITUAL

The origin of matter or natural substance is spiritual. Swedenborg's concept of matter was not that of Descartes who defined it as extense. Matter, to Swedenborg, derived its existence from

motion, and “the only real thing in motion is *conatus* (endeavor).” (AC 8911, 9293, 5116: 3, Coro. 30e) It is obvious that the creation of spatial matter thus came about from an aggregate of endeavors or spiritual substances. The process is beyond our imagination to follow, but its necessity follows logically from the premise that *conatus* must be the source of motion. *Conatus* is spiritual, living. “The *conatus* of life’s ultimate forces” (DLW 311, Latin) does not appear living, for it is the *conatus* to motion. Motion is a dead thing, and endows all matter with inertia and the properties of space and time.

Here I think we have the only tenable philosophic definition of the natural and the spiritual. Everything spiritual is a form of *conatus*, everything natural or material is a form of motion. They are totally different and cannot be defined in common terms (DLW 83; Infl. 9). “That which from the spiritual world is in natural things . . . is a *conatus*, on the cessation of which action or motion ceases. . . . This force or this endeavor in an action or motion is the spiritual in the natural . . . for to think and will is spiritual, and to act and be moved is natural. They who do not think beyond nature do not indeed grasp this, but still they cannot deny it . . .” (AC 5173).

It is therefore futile to identify the interior grades of natural substance (such as are described in the *Principia* by the first natural point, the first and second finites and the first elementaries) with substances of the spiritual world which go to make up the spiritual atmospheres and the souls of men. Spiritual things are not forms of motion but forms of *conatus*—and *conatus* is of many degrees and kinds.

Spiritual things are manifold and various, and have interior contents. A thought consists of general ideas which enclose a host of “least” perceptions. Swedenborg once showed some boys from a heavenly gymnasium that the natural insect they saw, through his mind, on the paper on which he was writing contained most perfect viscera and parts. He then added that in a corresponding fashion “every spark of thought” and “every drop of affection” was divisible even to infinity, and that so far as one’s ideas are divisible, so far one is wise (CL 329). He did not mean that thought comes in sparks or affection in drops. Spiritual things have spiritual parts and constituents, not natural ones that are “least” in any physical sense.

We must interpret what the Writings say about the spiritual world in the framework of spiritual things, if we are to derive their intended rational meaning. The spiritual atmospheres which, like the natural atmospheres, are discreted substances or "least forms," are not smallest in the physical sense, but are the least constituents of other spiritual forms—forms of living conatus—and as such are most highly perfect (see DLW 174). Far from being more simple, they are more manifold in their almost infinite diversities (CL 329; DLW 155; DP 6).

To conceive of these higher constituents of spiritual substance as "small in a physical sense" (p. 231) is difficult for me, especially in view of the apparent effort of Dr. Pendleton to define them as practically the same as the actives of the *Principia*. Do we have *two* worlds made of the same primitives? For certainly the *Principia* makes its points and finites the beginnings of the physical world. Are they now to serve, by a separate series of compositions, to build a spiritual world with all its degrees—a world mysteriously devoid of space yet made from the same "tridimensional" substances which compose the spatial cosmos?

#### NON-SPATIAL ORIGIN OF THE NATURAL WORLD

The doctrine of the Writings is clear, that the natural world is from a spiritual origin or created "mediately" through the spiritual world (Can., God iv: 7, 8). "For the substantial is the primitive of the material" (TCR 79: 7). "Substantial things are the initiaments of material things. What is matter, but a congregate of substances?" (TCR 280: 8). Swedenborg here alludes to the argument of Wolff (in his *Cosmologia*, par. 176) that bodies, or extended matter, are aggregates of simple substances, and that matter and motive force are really not substances although they so appear and may be so called. "Every body arises from that which is not extended," says Wolff (par. 223); and Swedenborg reflects the idea in *De Infinito* (Latin p. 19): "Extended things must finally originate and subsist from the non-extended." Any doubt on this point would rest on the unfounded notion that the cause must contain all the attributes of the effects, and that there could be "nothing new under the sun." This is, of course, a necessary postulate of a monistic position which would make the universe either wholly spiritual or wholly physical.

By degrees, Swedenborg rejected not only creation from mathematical points such as those of Zeno (which Wolff had shown to be purely imaginary \*), but also Wolff's idea that a non-extended substance had to be "simple," that is, devoid of inner constituents, qualities, or organization. But Swedenborg continued to maintain that the causes of natural creation had to be spiritual, and that matter was formed from radiant energy while the spiritual was formed from love and wisdom (TCR 75: iii).

#### THE ATTRIBUTES OF AN EFFECT CAN DIFFER FROM THE ATTRIBUTES OF THE CAUSE

If the natural had no attributes not already possessed by the spiritual, which is its cause and creative origin, its "creation" would be a meaningless word. Creation must imply the existence of something new. Matter must have "properties" not possessed by spiritual substances, namely, "space and time," which are definitely not properties of spiritual substance, even though the latter has something *corresponding* to them. It is even said that although the natural world was created by the Lord through the spiritual (Can., God iv. 7), yet it "drew nothing whatever" from the spiritual, or vice versa (DLW 83). Obviously, an effect draws all its reality and subsistence from the continual creative influx of the cause. But the characteristics which make matter to be matter are not at all present in the spiritual "primitives," but are new limitations described as "time and space."

By the same token, the Divine does not possess space or time or even changes of state, although their causes, beginnings, or sources are in the Divine (TCR 27). There was no creation out of nothing, but there was a creation of the finite out of *nothing finite*. We could accept Dr. Pendleton's statement that "the Infinite Esse must be tridimensional," only if by this we can understand the infinite love, the infinite wisdom and the infinite use which in their unity constitute the Divine essence. But to call these Divine correspondences three "dimensions" seems unjustified.

Creation in its descending degrees implies limitation. Within the natural world this is accompanied by a lessening of motion, a stepping down of physical energy. But the spiritual, in its descent and gradual finition, assumed different limitations, which cannot be described, except correspondentially, as lessenings of

\* *Cosmologia*, par. 218.

energy. And to attempt to refine the concept of "space" by mathematical abstractions and the use of philosophical sublimations in order to apply it to spiritual substance leaves us with nothing spiritual or living. It only inclines the mind to think of life as "the interior activity of nature" (TCR 35: 10).

#### SWEDENBORG AND THE PHILOSOPHERS

Dr. Pendleton makes a special effort to prove that Leibnitz—who, compared with Wolff, excelled in interior judgment and was therefore able to revise his opinions or clarify them in the next world (TCR 335; LJ post. 262–264)—had a theoretical "monad" which closely resembled Swedenborg's "first natural point." This seems indeed true, especially since Swedenborg states that he revised his chapter on the Point after studying Wolff's digests of Leibnitz's critique of the "mathematical point." The "point" of the *Principia* therefore becomes a "metaphysical point," and in *De Infinito* a "simple" non-extended entity. The metaphysical aspect of the dynamic point was already suggested by its origin in "conatus."

But when Swedenborg criticized Wolff's definition of extense as "that which has parts outside parts" (p. 176), he also explained that "non-material extense . . . cannot be said to occupy space within itself, though the extense outside it is said to occupy space" (Ontol. 59). This allows for the meaning that what is non-extended in itself may yet by impletion be present in a space, so that a space may be said to be occupied; even as the soul can be present in the body—thus occupying space in the universe—yet in itself be non-extended. The same idea is expressed when it is said in the Writings that the soul as a spiritual substance has nothing in common with space (TCR 103; Infl. 11), but still has "impletion" in that it is present everywhere in the body and is divisible without loss (CL 220). This kind of presence by influx can be called a spiritual extension if this term be properly qualified. But the doctrine denies that angels can be said to be "in the ether and in the stars, thus within nature and not above or outside it"; for "the spiritual world is where man is, and in no wise away from him" (DLW 92; cp. LJ 9).

Swedenborg had consistently accepted the principle of Leibnitz that bodies (i.e., material things) are aggregates of substances and that the extended arises from the non-extended. But he in-

creasingly objected to the idea of the soul as a “*simple substance.*” In his fragmentary manuscript on “The Harmony between the Soul and the Body” he took Leibnitz and Wolff to task for their assuming occult qualities in the soul while this was defined as a simple substance created out of nothing (42). He advocates instead an empirical study of the soul within its seat in nature (73ff); and advances again the theory of a surviving spirituous fluid—which was in principle retained in the Writings in the doctrine of the “limbus” (76). But as late as 1742 he faced the question what the soul was like (Rat. Psych. 521–524). For after all his studies of the body he must admit the soul to be a spiritual essence which is immaterial, and conceivable only by “analogies and eminences” with the help of a doctrine of “correspondences and representations.” It transcends the intellect and can be grasped only by faith (compare AK 20, 21). He tended to picture the life of the soul after death as a life of intuitive or pure intelligence independent of sensation and reason. But he deplored that such words as “immaterial” and “non-extended” seemed to abstract all real predicates from the soul unless we allow it to possess spiritual analogues to extension, motion and parts (Rat. Psych. 498).

When Swedenborg’s spiritual senses were opened, he could at last gather an empirical knowledge of the soul! But the evidence before him was confusing, and he could at first not credit everything that confronted him, or explain it. He admits that he did not yet know what the actual form of spirits was, yet maintains that a spirit was organic and in some sense extended, as a substantial subject of thought must be. In a passage which Dr. Pendleton partly cites, Swedenborg relates how he had been led to conceive of forms “almost without boundaries, thus without spaces and times,” but “still within nature and without life.” And he adds: “As long as the mind detains itself or is detained in such forms, it is so far apart from life; but those things which are within or above them, are living from the Lord, but still organic because they have nothing of life *in se* even as the forms within nature. . . . Wherefore no one can have any concept about the forms which are within the natural ones. . . . There are spiritual forms never perceptible within the most subtle of nature” (SD 3484).

Spirits had bodies and lived in an extended sensory environment; that became quite clear from overwhelming evidence. But

what kind of body, and what kind of extension, was not so easy to determine. The learned claimed that if the soul was immaterial, it could not be an organic substance nor could it be extended in any sense, for their idea of "immateriality" was nothingness! "When yet the thing is just the reverse," Swedenborg testifies, "for unless spirits were organic and angels were organized substances they could neither speak nor see nor think" (AC 1533). And Swedenborg confesses that he also had been in error: "Before my sight was opened I could hardly entertain any other idea about the innumerable things which appear in the other life than others, namely that light, and such things as exist from light, besides things of sensation, could nowise be given in the other life. . . ." His error was not to realize that even an "immaterial" soul can be an organized substance and have spiritual extension.

The system presented in the Writings is a dualism. Swedenborg did not object to Descartes' teaching that there were two totally different substances, one spiritual and the other natural or material. This may be seen from the work *Influx*. What he deplores is the prevalent ignorance about what the spiritual really was and the mistaken notions that it was either "mere thought" or a purer natural (Infl. 2, 18). The new teachings given in the Writings show that the spiritual organizes itself into forms corresponding to the fibres and fascicles of the material body, so that knowledges and states of good and truth actually make a spiritual body the forms and coils of which differ according to man's good or evil character.\* And this is the spiritual body which is actually seen in the other life and is the "spiritual substance" that was present in the earthly body as its soul—a substance which has nothing in common with space or extension (TCR 103; CL 220, 315: 10, 11).

#### THE PUREST THINGS OF NATURE

Spiritual things are not extended in a physical sense. Swedenborg, after his first surprise, realized that the bodies of angels seen in heaven were organized of good and truth (TCR 583), being purely spiritual. But a spirit does retain an individual organized plane in the space-time world. This is not the spiritual body—which is composed of spiritual substances, (DLW 91)—but it is a "border" or *limbus*, "drawn from the inmosts of nature," which

\* TCR 583, 38, 351; DP 319; DLW 270; LJ post. 323; AC 5078, 5881, etc.

is to serve as "a medium between the spiritual and the natural; through which he is limited (*finitur*) so as to be subsistent and enduring"; and through which he has a relativity to those things which are in nature and also something correspondent to them" (TCR 103; DLW 257, 388; DP 220; Wis. viii: 4). This limbus is so subtly organized that it contains a permanent record of all the mental processes of his natural memory which becomes dormant and serves the spirit for a body; somewhat as a magnetic tape can preserve every nuance of an orchestra. Yet it is not the organ of thought for the spirit, but is instead compared to a cutaneous covering which at death has "receded" from the spiritual body which it serves (DLW 257).

To my mind, the spiritual substances which the Writings speak of as composing the souls of men, the bodies of spirits, the spiritual atmospheres, and the sun of heaven as well as all other spiritual "creations," can in no wise be identified with such entities as the first aura of the *Economy*, the actives of the *Principia*, or even the "first natural point." Such finites do, however, answer very closely to the description of the "natural substances of the natural mind" (DLW 257); selected from the "inmosts of nature" to serve, not as a spiritual body, but as a medium by which angels and spirits "can be adjoined and conjoined to the human race" (Wis. viii: 4).

The limbus remains in nature. The angels "know that there is such a medium, but because it is from the inmosts of nature and the terms of speech are from its ultimates, it cannot be described except by abstractions" (*ibid.*). And similarly the *Economy* shows that the "spirituous fluid," distilled from the first aura of nature, "cannot be described or defined, genetically, except by recourse to a mathematical philosophy of universals" (2 Econ. 225). It was such a substance that Leibnitz and Swedenborg both sought to describe with the aid of a calculus of infinities; and if Dr. Pendleton in his valuable studies can find the proper abstractions to describe it, we should all rejoice.

But the study of the natural limbus will not suffice for understanding the substance and life of the spirit or the extense of the spiritual world. Spiritual things are not explained by making them natural.