

Connected Whole X

Part b

413.¹ *How Something Must Be Added to the Meaning of Form Other than What Is Geometrical.* Even as he was seeing *The Principia* through the press, Swedenborg began a new subject, adding a much larger encompassment than physical universe to his philosophical searching. In *The Infinite and the Final Cause of Creation*, he turned to man, specifically to the search for the human soul. In *The Principia* that which is present in the Infinite, yet not created, is treated of under the term *conatus*. Its image is the geometry of the first finite thing, the first finite. In the "infinite," obviously, as used in *The Infinite* geometry will not do in the series where man is the intended final finite effect in creation. In *The Infinite*, ends take the place of geometry, and *nexus* is used instead of *conatus*.²

Ends are not geometrical even if some ends are ultimate forms that are (the human body, for example) by which further ends are possible (the ends of the will, for example). Geometry is not excluded from the philosophy of man, but it loses its primary place that it had in *The Principia*. But if those ends are not geometrical, what are they? In *The Infinite and Final Cause of Creation* ends are by a succession of end, cause, and effect, that is, as one means follows another. First there is creation of the first finite thing and then successive formation of finites, actives, atmospheres, mineral, plant, and animal kingdoms. In agreement with *The Principia* they all "concur" in man as the ultimate finite effect. The ultimate finite effect, which is man, is given a soul. The soul forms (!) its kingdom.

¹ Correction to note 410, Jan.-Mar. 1983 issue of *The New Philosophy*, p. 36. Read "...that name his first series of volumes on his search for the soul, *The Economy of the Animal Kingdom*,..." instead of "*The Animal Kingdom*."

² Both *nexus* and *conatus* have become English terms. Translators ought to give pause to the suggestions that these Latin words should find better English expressions, so, as some say, "not to give pause to the English reader." Pause in the first case is a stop sign; in the second case it is a think sign. That is exactly what ought to happen to every reader. That is, both *conatus* and *nexus* ought to give pause to think to every reader. A consideration of this is a subject in itself.

A vicegeneral of that formed kingdom is the rational mind that itself is capable of ends. Those ends consist of the ability of the mind to acknowledge, to adore, and to worship God. (See e.g. circle of creation, Philos. Note 394, *New Philosophy*, July-Dec, 1981.) Note well that aspect of what is Most Superior earlier in philosophy named "Infinite" is now named "God." (Compare revised circle as Swedenborg's philosophy continues, *ibid.*, note 400.) Whatever the ends are in God (that is a separate subject), ends in man can be manifest if he acknowledges, loves, and worships God. All of this is present in philosophy; there it is described in the first two major works of Swedenborg. The only thing *created* is the first finite from which is possible all the things in the descent to man by *formation*. The creation of man is not described by geometrical forms as are the things described in *The Principia*.

Yet form that is geometrical is important in describing the formation of the animal (anatomical) body of man, the body that contains a soul. (See by analogy with the chick in the egg, EAK I chap. III.) Geometry is not used to describe the soul nor even the next degree of its kingdom, the rational mind. I say it does not describe, although it is a fact that geometry is used in the *recognition*, that is, its philosophical origin by induction, of the leading doctrine of philosophy, the doctrine of Series and Degrees, or of Order. Its induction is from the geometry of the bloods, fibres, and vessels. (See EAK as a whole.)

What is prominent in the first treatise of *The Economy* is that there are three kinds of bloods according to degrees, three kinds of arteries and veins to carry these bloods, and other essential organic triads, as fibres for example, that differ by degrees.

The first thing promised in *The Economy* is that it will report on his intended search for the soul, but soon after this search is begun, almost but not at its very beginning the second promise is that a doctrine of series and degrees is required. This doctrine is about an order of realities in creation. The promise is developed in the final chapter of Treatise I of *The Economy*.

414. *The Conditions for a New Subject and a First Report on It, As the Beginning of 'rational psychology.'* The final chapter of the first Treatise of *The Economy of the Animal Kingdom* (chap. VIII, already referred to) outlines the conditions under which Swedenborg's search for the soul is possible, under the title: "An Introduction to Rational Psychology." The second Treatise continues with inductions on human anatomy begun in the first Treatise, and concludes with the first progress

report on the search for the soul, following the formal definition of the Doctrine of Series and Degrees. The title of this report is "The Human Soul" (EAK II, chap. III). Within this chapter it becomes evident that the search for the soul has produced enough content that a new subject is beginning to appear, called "rational psychology." Although the intended search for the soul is the subject of Swedenborg's philosophy after *The Infinite*, as has been suitably emphasized by a number of authors, the place of "An Introduction to Rational Psychology" has not always been clearly described. So a few words on that subject are proper. To repeat, Treatise I of *The Economy* ends with an essay that describes the conditions under which rational psychology is possible. The principal means given primary attention is the Doctrine of Series and Degrees, or of Order. The careful reader will discover also the beginnings of complementary doctrines of substances (as in a previous note) and of correspondences. (See EAK I, nos. 648-649.)

The appearance of the words "rational psychology" in the final chapter of Part II of *The Economy*—"The Human Soul"—is what gives to the title of that essay, "An Introduction to Rational Psychology" (the final chapter of Part I) its meaning, namely the condition under which the search for the soul as rational psychology *is possible*, and this condition is the use of the "DOCTRINE OF SERIES AND DEGREES, OR THE DOCTRINE OF ORDER" (EAK I, 579; II, 210). "An Introduction to Rational Psychology" is neither rational psychology itself nor the preface or introduction to any particular book. From now on it is Swedenborg's intention that any book on rational psychology, any study in the subject rational psychology, would have the condition of that chapter as the minimal condition under which it could be written or studied. I place "written" first because what Swedenborg wrote in his successive progress reports comes first. But as the study of Swedenborg's philosophy becomes better understood, new and original studies in rational psychology will become possible.

Swedenborg is the only author who has complied with the condition stated above. The first effort is his report on his search for the soul that brings the published part of *The Economy of the Animal Kingdom* to a close with the essay referred to above, entitled "The Human Soul." The second effort, the first of book length, is the manuscript he left, published now and appearing in English as *Rational Psychology*. (I have an essay on the subject of rational psychology in its relation to the whole of Swedenborg's philosophy pending publication.)

415. *Forms Beyond the Geometrical in The Fibre*. It has been stated that geometry plays a principal part in *The Principia* theory of the creation and formation of the natural universe. As a principal part, it is one of the three of: 1. Experience; 2. Geometry and Rational Philosophy; 3. Reason. But beyond this participation by geometry, we read in *The Principia*:

Under the empire of geometry, and under the mechanical laws of motion, we may be allowed to rank the whole mineral as well as vegetable kingdoms, and indeed the animal too in respect to mechanical organs, muscles, fibres, and membranes; or in respect to its anatomical, vegetative, and organic relations (Clissold edition, p. 3).

As the limitation of "the empire of geometry":

...in respect to the soul and its various faculties, I do not conceive it possible that they can be explained or comprehended by any of the known laws of motion; such indeed is our present state of ignorance, that we know not whether the motions by which the soul operates on the organs of the body be such as to be reducible to any rule or law, either similar or dissimilar to those of mechanism (ibid.).

Although the geometrical aspect of forms had already appeared in *The Principia* and later in the published parts of *The Economy* (Pts. I and II), as hinted in the above quotations from *The Principia*, "form" must be applied beyond geometry. Yet the explicit recognition of the doctrine of forms and its treatment awaited its appearance in *The Fibre*, written six or seven years after *The Principia*. The title THE DOCTRINE OF FORMS is an editorial insertion. (See *Fibre nos.* 261-279 for explicit treatment of forms, and of course later in Swedenborg's philosophy, for applications.)³

Following an extended geometrical treatment of forms in ascending order of angular, circular, spiral, vortical, celestial, and spiritual, along the way forms beyond the geometrical are introduced. Celestial and spiritual are reversed from the ascending order in which these names are applied in the Writings where celestial refers to what is prior to spiritual, and as to the heavens in the spiritual world, to what is the highest heaven. In philosophy celestial refers to the natural heavens, that is to the whole of the natural universe. This was the common usage of the day.

³ See also a recent treatment of this doctrine in *New Philosophy*, 85: 84-95.

In *The Fibre*, the use of form beyond the geometrical begins while describing the vortical form, that is, if by geometrical one means what can be represented clearly to the understanding by lines and curves. For as is written with regard to the vortical form,

...for the idea of this form almost transcends the human understanding because it transcends geometry and its lines and curves.... And because...this form almost transcends the comprehension, it follows that in unfolding and perceiving it we are, as it were, in the shade of a kind of ignorance...[and] we class the things predicated of it as among paradoxes and conjectures. But no matter. There are innumerable phenomena which confirm the actuality of this form and its fluxion (Fibre, 265b).

The Doctrine of Series and Degrees, or of Order, in particular with regard to the degrees of perfection, demands that there be a step-by-step, or degree-by-degree increase in perfection not only in those forms that can be described by lines and curves, but in degrees above when this is not the case. That is, there are degrees of perfection of form above the geometrical.

The notion of degrees of perfection is illustrated by the following:

Above all created nature, and therefore incomprehensible, ineffable, inexpressible by the most sublime analysis of the human mind, form in the abstract, contemplating all other forms in order outside itself and at the same time in itself, in that they are perfect (Fibre 267).

Illustration is promised "in the following Transaction" which was never completed by Swedenborg for publication. This is the book *Rational Psychology*.

This is not the completion of philosophical speculation on forms by Swedenborg, because there is also

...the perpetuo-spiritual form [which] is the DIVINE form itself—not properly a form, but pure essence, life, intelligence, wisdom, and most utterly abstracted from space, time, matter, figure, motion, change, destruction (Fibre 268).

In reviewing the natural forms, in descending order, the celestial form is spoken of as first, not last as in ascending order:

In addition to the natural forms of the universe or world recited above, first among which is the celestial form, there are also other forms which are called vital and therefore also spiritual, such as angelic forms, and human souls and minds, as also the souls of brutes (Fibre 269).

To treat adequately of the entrance into the subject of forms that are beyond the geometrical in the rest of the numbers in the section on forms (i.e. nos. 269-273^a) would probably take as much space, if examples were added from later philosophy of Swedenborg, as do these notes. Instead, allow me a personal favor to include here a comment I wrote near *Fibre* 273a at the time of an earlier reading, when influenced by the occurrence of the philosophical doctrines (in the parts published by Swedenborg in *The Economy*) of series and degrees, of substances and of correspondences, but not until then, the "doctrine of forms": "In short, the philosophical doctrines make one as a connected whole, as a unity as to knowledge (science in its broadest meaning) and also as to realities, ontological beings—all these. First they are 'so created that...' (there is always a purpose in creation). With human beings, there is accommodation to influx in the several degrees of the human organic, depending (as it turns out) on how 'free choice is exercised; that is, on morality, way of judgment, and of life.' " (This subject is introduced in two chapters on free will in *Rational Psychology*.) With no apologetics, Swedenborg breaks the section off with the words in the *Fibre* 273:

But to treat of these matters briefly is to treat of them obscurely; it suffices, however, for the intelligent. Let us now return to our fibre.

416. Reflections on "The Human Soul" in the Prologue to the *Animal Kingdom*. When Swedenborg set aside unpublished the *Rational Psychology*, he also stopped working on *The Economy* series, and wrote a Prologue to a new series (called *The Animal Kingdom*) on his search for the soul. There are reflections in the Prologue upon the only summary conclusion, or report on the search, so far actually published by him, namely "The Human Soul." One of his reflections was that it was done "both too hastily and too fast" (Prologue 19). Now therefore he returned to the search itself, not as if *The Economy* was in error, but that it was incomplete. So, coupled with these reflections, there was listed a large variety of things to be done. For example, instead of the doctrine of series and degrees only, there is an enumeration of the philosophical doctrines already mentioned or in some way applied: of Forms, of Order and Degrees, of Influx, of Correspondence and Representation, and of Modification (the order is as given in that place), and added is the Doctrine of Series and Society (AK I, 14).

There are two things essential to his philosophy as a whole involving "form" that go beyond geometry explicitly represented: As already noted, "economy" in the title of the first series reporting the search for its soul (*The Economy of the Animal Kingdom*), and now is

added "Society" as the name of a doctrine. Economy means government. Why does the chick in the egg, etc., occupy the prominent place and extended treatment of Chapter III of the first treatise of *The Economy*? By analogy it refers to the human soul in governing the creation and formation of its kingdom. That refers to one man within himself. But when there are two there is relation between two, that is "between man and man" to use an expression made important by Buber. That is the beginning of Society.

In the analogy of the chick in the egg, form (and nothing but form) appears in the diagrams of the successive drawings by Malpighi, the anatomist, referred to by Swedenborg to describe at first the hourly, and later the day-by-day, formation from at first "no effigy" (the first irregular spot seen by Malpighi) to the appearance of forms of the organs, and finally of the chick itself. But all that by itself would be nothing more than a report on Malpighi's careful observations. All that reporting on geometrical forms of organs as they appeared would be but a recognition by Swedenborg of Malpighi as a master anatomist, and by itself would be for us to recognize Swedenborg merely as an anatomist or even (as someone referred to him) as a "literary anatomist." But Swedenborg's importance is as a philosopher not as an anatomist.

As a matter of fact, it is patently erroneous to emphasize Swedenborg as a scientist because it was Swedenborg's expressed intent *not* to write as an anatomist but as a philosopher. (See EAK I, 16-21; see also his reflection in Preface to *Rational Psychology*, p. 2.) To use the anatomists—and in this place especially Malpighi—for knowledge as the beginning upon which he depended in the exercise of the analytical way of philosophy, is what Swedenborg did as philosopher. That way is defined both as to teaching (for the reader) and what the teaching is about, that is, realities. That is the meaning of doctrine itself. The application of the Doctrine of Series and Degrees, or of Order in this regard is philosophy, not science. The science used had to do with effects. Philosophical doctrine uses effects to make inductions about causes.

What then is the philosophy of the chapter on the chick in the egg, etc.? It is not the geometrical forms that are observed by the senses and as reproduced from Malpighi, albeit so important that Swedenborg could not have taken a single step as philosopher without them. Form also appears philosophically, that is, as a doctrine that is what is seen by the understanding in the form of government by the soul of the chick, that formed the visible organs of the chick, which from yolk and albumen to fully formed chick,

feathers and all, pecked its way out of the shell on the final day of incubation.

All fertilized chicken eggs under proper incubation conditions produce chicks. However little is understood of the government of the soul that led to that production, the fact is that the purposeful end is concluded when the chick appears.

There is, therefore, an appearance that there is in the soul a governing principle of ends; call it what one wills as a first thought, its existence is not a geometrical form, yet it exists in a form. It makes governing possible, hence must be some *thing*. And as outlined in "An Introduction to Rational Psychology," things are of substances, becoming things by their form, by organic form as seen in the chick and in the egg.

Form seen by the sight of the understanding is only one aspect of what the understanding can see; it is prior to the geometrical form that can be seen by the eye of the anatomist. Swedenborg is really not interested in chickens as such. He is not searching for the soul of the chicken but for the soul of man. A record of the formation of the body of the chicken was available in science; the hour-to-hour and day-to-day formation of the human body was not available. Therefore, there is another aspect of seeing by the understanding, not with the eye of the anatomist, but by analogy with the eye of the philosopher. Throughout the chapter on the Chick in the Egg, etc., a description of the formation of the human body in the womb was imagined by *analogy* not as anatomical forms as such, but as forms of use.