

Swedenborg's Philosophy as a Connected Whole

V. Mechanism of the Intercourse Between the Body and the Soul.

454. A Review of the Notes so far on Swedenborg's philosophy as a connected whole, and a preview of the present set.

In the first of the four installments in this series on Swedenborg's philosophy as a connected whole, the principal subjects of Chapter I of *The Principia* were reviewed: the means leading to true philosophy, the nature of true philosophy and of the true philosopher. By "true philosopher" Swedenborg meant the philosopher writing on the subject of his *Principia* theory of creation and the formation of the universe, not on philosophy in general, as illustrated by the following: "By a true philosopher, we understand a man, who, by the means treated, is enabled to arrive at the real causes, and the knowledge of those things in the mechanical world which are invisible and remote from the senses . . ." Historically the true philosopher also is referred to as the "first mortal" and a man of "perfect integrity." The chapter closes with a description of what one should be today, in order to be a true philosopher (*New Philos.*, Jan.-Mar. 1984).

I was tempted to offer an analogy of the original true philosopher with the internal sense of the story of Noah given in the *Arcana Coelestia* (*New Philos.*, Oct.-Dec. 1985). Of course Swedenborg the philosopher, in 1734, the year he published *The Principia*, did not know what Swedenborg the revelator would know and write in 1747 and publish as the *Arcana Coelestia*. Nevertheless we should be encouraged to reflect upon his philosophical work from the Writings or Theological works.

Except for a few things about the first natural point as conatus in *The Infinite* and the first finite as the first created primitive, *The Principia* theory itself is not treated in the notes. A number of persons have written on that subject. The Notes are not intended to give a complete description of Swedenborg's philosophy. That would require more space and time than is available. Rather they are intended to show the connectedness of the principal philosophical works written by Swedenborg from 1734 to 1744. And so from a kind of connectedness even with revelation as illustrated in the analogy just referred to, we proceed to connectedness within the

philosophical works themselves. While *The Principia* was in press, Swedenborg wrote the small work, *The Infinite, and the Final Cause of Creation*. Over one half of *The Infinite* is devoted to an argument for the existence of the Infinite as the final cause of creation, and for the existence of a nexus between the Infinite and what is finite. Man is described as the final finite effect in creation and formation. And so from the creation and formation of the universe in *The Principia* Swedenborg's philosophy turns to man in *The Infinite* (*New Philos.*, Jan.-Mar. 1986). The first thing about man treated of in Swedenborg's philosophy is "how the divine end is obtained in man" (*New Philos.*, July-Sept. 1986). A work complementary to *The Infinite*, and published under the same cover, is *The Mechanism of the Intercourse Between the Soul and the Body*, the subject of the present set of notes.

The Infinite and *The Mechanism* are referred to on their joint title page as "Forerunner of a Reasoned Philosophy." As noted, *The Infinite* involves a turning from cosmogony—that is, a theory of the origin of the universe—to a consideration of man as a means to the divine end. *The Mechanism* is concerned specifically with the human soul as that part of man which is immortal.

The Mechanism is not a report on the projected search for the soul, but instead an outline of problems to be considered in anticipation of that search. First there are nine questions raised about what is proper to philosophical consideration of the soul (Note 455). One can adopt either an affirmative or a negative attitude toward applying philosophy in that way. Swedenborg offers answers to two threats to the affirmative position (Note 456). Only the ninth and last of the questions raised about the properness of philosophical considerations of the soul is considered in any detail. That question is, "Is the soul immortal?" (Note 457).

The larger part of *The Mechanism* is devoted to what Swedenborg calls "general propositions." These propositions concern subjects and problems that will arise in the search for the soul (Note 458). Some of the problems raised are such that they have, in past philosophy, tended to discourage search, leading not only to skepticism as to knowledge about the soul, but even to denial of its existence. Swedenborg's reaction to that is "We have no reason to despair of arriving at a knowledge of the soul. . . ." (Note 459).

Finally, it is not only the "intercourse between the soul and the body," but also the soul's nature, leading to its immortality, that will be the principal subject of the search for the soul (Note 460).

Since Swedenborg referred to the Only Begotten in describing

the true philosopher in the *Principia*; to the Only Begotten in both *The Infinite* and *The Mechanism*; and near the end of *The Infinite* and at the end of *The Mechanism* to Christian philosophy, I have taken the liberty of referring to Swedenborg as a Christian philosopher in the years 1734 to 1744 (Note 461).

455. Questions that arise at the outset of *The Mechanism of the Intercourse Between the Soul and the Body*. Here I simply state the questions without reference to Swedenborg's comments. In Note 457 I discuss the ninth and final question.

- (1) Is the soul finite or infinite? (p. 143)
- (2) Is the soul amenable to laws? (p. 143)
- (3) Is the finite conceivable apart from extension? (p. 150)
- (4) Is the soul a pure simple? (p. 154)
- (5) Is the soul a simple finite? (p. 156)
- (6) Is there passivity in the soul as well as activity? (p. 158)
- (7) Is the soul bound by geometrical and mechanical laws? (p. 160)
- (8) The comparison of the soul with machines—in what sense justifiable? (p. 163)
- (9) Is the soul immortal? (p. 165-8)

By inserting page numbers I hope to give some idea of the extent of the treatment in each case.

456. There are two threats to an affirmative attitude to the search for the soul. The first is that since the soul (which is the subject of the search), is unknown, the question that may hold up the search, is, "From what known laws can the search begin?" To be affirmative to the task, Swedenborg suggests that we should believe in laws we already know, and consider whether mechanical laws as we know them can be the means. He adds to this the argument of increasing perfection in going from the gross world that includes the body, to the subtle world that includes the soul. Thus:

Mechanical laws admit of superlative perfection as much as any other laws (p. 168).

The second threat also arises from our ignorance with regard to the soul. Ignorance can lead to a negative attitude, skepticism, and also

From ignorance of the state of the soul, we may easily pass to a denial of its existence (p. 171).

However, belief in the perfection of mechanical laws, even to the point of believing in their superlative perfection in the soul, goes part way, at least, toward dispelling total or "supreme ignorance" (see Note 459).

457. Swedenborg offers three ways of arguing that the soul is immortal—each one from love: 1. The love of the soul for God as the Infinite. 2. The love of the soul for its body. 3. The love of God for the soul of man.

1. With regard to the first way of arguing, it has been shown in *The Infinite* that there must be love for God in the soul in order that the divine end can be obtained in man.

... that there must be something divine, or receptive of the divine in man; otherwise the [divine] end is not obtained We may... learn through reason what this divine principle [end] consists in; in short that it lies in the circumstance, that man can acknowledge, and does acknowledge, God; that he can believe, and doth believe, that God is infinite... that by that undoubting faith, he is sensible in love, or delight resulting from love, of a peculiar connection with the Infinite (*Infinite* pp. 111-112, Philos. Notes 443, 444).

Hence in *The Mechanism* the argument continues that man

... can acknowledge God, and through love feel himself in the bond of the final cause—who, therefore, has in him God's final cause—can never die, but is forever a partaker of the final cause, and therein, of the Infinite; in a word, a permanent existence: and nothing whatever could have induced [him] to believe, that this final cause would desert man at the hour of death; which indeed would be to accuse the Infinite whose cause it is, of finiteness or imperfection (p. 174).

2. The argument for the immortality of the soul that depends on the love of the soul for its body begins,

We may also deduce and conclude analytically and rationally from the nexus of natural beings and things in the world, that the soul or subtlest part of the body must be immortal.

It is argued in *The Mechanism* that there is a subtle world in which things are more perfect than in the gross world that is accessible to the senses. Since the soul is a part of that subtler world, it (the soul) is not liable to changes as the body is, and beyond that

... the immortality of the soul is declared by facts presented in our very bodies. For love, with its delicious sense, which is purer as the nature is purer, arises simply from the harmonious connection of natural parts. It is afterwards derived *per nexum* into the grosser parts of the body (p. 175).

But a condition is raised. Because the body is of the nature of the mutable world, the argument cannot be made for the immortality of the body, as is the case with the soul, but instead

... at perpetuity by the propagation of offspring, and the representation of itself in another being arising from it, in whom it may in a manner begin to live when itself surceases. This could never proceed from the body unless the cause and source pre-existed in the soul; nor could it be derived from the soul into the body save by connection and contiguity, and consequently by supreme delight. As we may see from the consideration, that the soul concurs to this end, a particle being veritably taken from it: so that in truth we know from the effect which is involved in the cause; from the last end what lies in the first; from the body what lies in the soul; namely, that in the body, by the instinct of the soul, a similar estate is desired to that which there is in the soul (pp. 175-b).

The reader may wonder if the same is not so in animal propagation. The answer is, "not so," as the argument in *The Mechanism* continues,

... and it is clear that the aspiration to this end is of a deeper and more sublime nature in the man that in other living creatures, inasmuch as he not only enjoys the delights of propagating and rearing his offspring, but has also a perennial desire of living in the persons of his sons to remote posterity; whence it is seldom that parental love is extinguished, but increases rather in the descending to children's children. Not so, however, in brute creation (p. 176).

The argument continues, but enough has been given here to show how love looks to immortality in the love of the soul for its body (see pp. 176-7).

3. Finally, let us turn to the love of God for the soul of man as an argument for the immortality of the soul. That argument begins,

Furthermore, in demonstrating the immortality of the soul, we may infer from the Infinite to the soul, as from the soul to the body; that is to say, from the connection between the Infinite and the soul, as from the connection between the soul and the body; for as we said before, from connection love immediately arises, or that delight which is felt in love in other words, in the harmonious conjunction of parts and modes in the world, (pp. 177-8).

An analogy is presented between love of the soul by the Infinite, and love of the body by the soul; that is, as

The love or friendship between the body and the soul, as between the soul and the Infinite, lies entirely in the connection.

But as referred to in the previous set of notes (n. 452 with regard to *Infinite*, p. 137) "Analogical instances illustrate, although they cannot demonstrate," and yet "... by the comparison of the soul and the body it seems possible to gain some light respecting the connection of the Infinite with the world."

Those then who are in the nexus or bond of the divine end—which bond is perceived in the delights of the love (by man) of God—cannot but be reciprocally in God's love, inasmuch as they are in the divine nexus; nor consequently can His love towards the soul be other than similar in this respect to the love of the soul towards its best beloved, because its most united friend, the body; wherefore it must infinitely wish the soul to be His likeness; and love to assign and to give to the soul what itself possesses, that is to say, perpetuity and immortality. If the Infinite did not respect as Its own the finite which is connected with It, particularly in that essential particular, of making the soul like Itself in immortality, then there would be no element of infinity or absolute purity in God's love toward man, but, on the contrary, a something repugnant [*repugnaret*, opposed] to the Infinite (pp. 178-9).

For if there was something changeable in God, likeness itself would change, and that which is immediately created would have to change in order to preserve its likeness to a changing God.

It may be recalled that in Chapter I of *The Principia*, the "true philosopher" referred to the first man as a man of perfect integrity. That integrity depended upon a connection of man with the world

and the Infinite. Here in the *Mechanism* Swedenborg returns to that subject, while writing of the love of God for the soul of man.

But this love can only extend to the parts of the purer world, i.e. to the soul; and not to the parts of the comparatively impure and imperfect world, or to the body . . . Nevertheless, if the body could be so completely governed by its purer essence. . . it seems likely that this state of the first man, formed, as he was, in correlation to all the harmony of the world, and that in him all the grosser parts admitted of being ruled by the soul, and consequently with it could enjoy immortality. But when this integrity and perfection in the connection between the soul and the body, and therefore in the connection between God and the soul, had perished, and afterwards degeneration had naturally ensued in the posterity of Adam, then of consequence the body could no longer be considered as a part of the pure and perfect, but of the imperfect world: and so mutability and mortality invaded what was once immutable and immortal; prerogatives, however, which may possibly be regained if the soul be clothed with a body which is not immediately inherited in the hitherto natural manner from an imperfect parent (pp. 179-180).

In trying to imagine what Swedenborg the Christian might have meant at the time, we at first thought recall that those ancient people, according to the literal sense of the Bible, lived hundreds, not three-score and ten, years. That of course is not immortality. But possibly in passing to the spiritual world they took with them from the body something more like the body than was the case with later people. But reflecting on this from what Swedenborg wrote as Revelator, we know that "Adam" and "Noah," etc. refer to churches. There is something about a church that is immortal, namely, those things proper to the church which can be immortal as the church is in heaven.

When we approach the concluding remarks of *The Mechanism* we shall see that, philosophically, the argument for the immortality of the soul is far from over, since the philosophical search for the soul will be a search for its nature, and the immortality of the soul is part of its nature.

458. Thirteen General Propositions as to Subjects to be studied in the Search for the Soul. A term often used in *The Mechanism* concerning connections in the series from the bodily senses to the soul, is *contiguum*. This term means a variety of things: touch by contact, a reaching out to be included, or as the expression goes, "to keep in touch with." Each of the propositions serves its purpose when it points out a leading problem that will arise in the search for the soul. Contiguum as touch is evidenced in the arrangement of chapters in the two and one-half volumes of *The Animal Kingdom* in English. Its first chapter treats of the tongue, and over a thousand pages later its final chapter treats of taste. Many subjects are treated in the intervening pages, but the tongue as the organ of taste and taste as an example of touch, bracket the whole. Again, touch comes forward in *The Five Senses*, an enumeration of topics intended to continue *The Animal Kingdom* series if Swedenborg's philosophical search had not been interrupted by the call to be Seer and Revelator. Its final chapter named "Epilogue Concerning the Senses and Sensation in General" opens as follows:

... the origin of all sensation is from touch or external impulse The sensation of touch, taste and smell arise from a touch or impulse of heavy particles. But the sense of hearing and of sight from touch or impulse of particles not heavy...
(*Senses* 444).

As to *The Mechanism*, its purpose is to provide part of a "Forerunner of a Reasoned Philosophy" (see full title of *The Infinite* and *The Mechanism*.) It begins with the nine questions noted above, about whether philosophy can be applied to the study of the soul. They are followed by thirteen general propositions concerning problems that will arise in the projected search for the soul. For the most part, only titles will be given to the propositions in the Notes. I have already referred to "contiguum" as an important term when the connection between the senses and the soul is described. Hence to the first proposition:

Proposition I. ". . . . the first general proposition we would state is, that all connection supposes contiguity and that no connection can be conceived or given without contiguity."

Proposition II. The contiguum, as "nexus" as it is also called (p. 184), when applied to the connection between body and soul, terminates in the body at one end and at the other end in the soul. Attention should be paid to the fact that the contiguum is referred to in this proposition as "series" (p. 185), which suggests that the language of the doctrine of series and degrees will become more and

more common as the contiguum comes under study, although the doctrine itself is not formally described until the final chapter of Treatise I of *The Economy of the Animal Kingdom*.

Proposition III states that operation between soul and body are accomplished by motion, or some kind of mutation or modification of the parts that make the contiguum. The example of hearing illustrates, for "How could one hear without motion in the air, and communication of the motion to the drum of the ear, and consequently to a graduated scale [series?] of finer and finer organs?"

Proposition IV may be reduced to a few words, namely, in order that there be motion or mutations there must be something moved or changed. Hence "There must be substances in man recipient of motion."

Proposition V refers to what Swedenborg calls the "cosmic space," that is, the space of the natural world, in which there is connection between its elements; as we can see, for example, because "we can see and perceive that one corner of the world is connected to the other, and that the nexus [in the world] reaches from the sun and stars to the eye of the beholder"

The subject of Proposition VI reaches into the "bodily space" to the mechanism that intervenes between the body and the soul. Operation there is possible only by mode or motion of elements that compose the organs, both of the external and grosser senses called bodily senses, and of the finer senses, later in the search for the soul called internal sensations which connect the world to the cerebrum and the finest organs therein. These admit "of innumerable undulations simultaneously and successively." We may add to this our experience of the sound of notes played by an orchestra of many instruments, or the complexity of ideas resulting from sounds in speaking, producing in the one case harmony of sounds and in the other case a harmony or connection of ideas.

Proposition VII extends the subject of proposition VI under variety. This proposition is a kind of essay emphasizing how elements of which the world is made, as substances, are capable of variety. Motion of elements can be adapted (are passive) to receive all kinds of variety, so as to be able to promote (are active) all kinds of variety of motion (see Prop. X).

Proposition VIII states that man as a living creature is not made simply of free elements from cosmic space, but is composed in special ways into corporeal forms in bodily space. Of these corporeal forms, *membranes* especially are essential to receiving motions

through the entire extent of the contiguum. The membranes, like senses and sensations, are referred to as gross when connection with the world outside the body is the subject, and finer and finer in continuation of the series to the soul. (When the search for the soul is conducted, terms "internal," and "external" are used, introduced by Rydelius. See *Philosopher's Note Book*, pp.59-60.)

In introducing Proposition IX it is said that "Having now arrived by the aid of reason at the conclusion, that the existence of finer membranes is not only possible, but plausible, we have next to consider their qualities. And if they are formed for the reception of motions, finer and finer, on the pattern of the motion in the elements, it follows that the membranes must of necessity be tense." Although *The Principia*, *The Infinite*, and *The Mechanism* were published in 1734, Swedenborg already had been working for many years on things preliminary to the subjects treated of in those books. Tension in membranes illustrates this because he had written a small work on *Tremulations* in 1720.

In Proposition X the general term of "to feel" is introduced, which is a way of expressing a kind of interior touch. Also in this proposition there is reference to how the soul operates on the body, not as previously where sensation and the operation from body to soul were the subject. Thus is introduced comparison between *passive* and *active* in psychological reacting and determination to action.

Proposition XI compares vibrations or undulations of fluids to motions in membranes in order to account for connection between membranes or organs according to laws of motion. Harmony continues to be an important subject in Swedenborg's philosophy, almost to its conclusion. See *Five Senses* nos. 552-616.

In Proposition XII we find expressed a general relation of the soul to the body by way of the contiguum. The nature of that relation deserves a fuller presentation here than has been given in the enumeration of the other propositions. First,

We have hitherto confined ourselves to the organs or membranes upon or through which sensations are conveyed by vibrations towards the soul. . . .

The organs or membranes are the means by which sensations from the bodily senses reach the soul.

Without these means, the soul would be destitute of all power and faculty to act or operate, and incapable of feeling what goes on in the grosser sphere; destitute also of the

faculty to cooperate with the body, and of the power of calling into motion similar parts, and this, more and more distinctly (pp. 219-220).

At this point in philosophy, the distinct steps of the contiguum from sensation itself by bodily organs to the soul, are not defined. Hence the rational mind does not leap to the readers attention as "the true center of the universe" as we shall see that it does late in *The Animal Kingdom*. Here mind and soul are not yet described as distinct, so the soul is referred to both as "the center" of motions arriving from the senses and as the cause of motions in and of the body. In *The Animal Kingdom* the soul is at the most superior place at one end of the contiguum, whereas the rational mind has been introduced as a step below the soul, so it is called "the center" because heavenly things arrive at it from above by means of the soul and earthly things arrive at it from below. But in *The Mechanism*—that is, before the rational mind is distinguished from the soul—it is written that,

In the soul undoubtedly we have a center of all the vibrations we have spoken of, as well as a most active and supremely geometrical and mechanical essence. . . .

Often in philosophy, "soul" is a term that includes all the higher faculties of the mind. This is a way of speaking even among readers of Swedenborg's works, and is common in expressing present-day thought—that is, if the existence of the soul is granted. Alternately, as is well known, the mind is regarded as the highest thing in man, in which case, the mind-body problem is spoken of instead of soul-body, as when speaking of the philosophy of Descartes, for example.

Notice there is also as yet an indeterminacy as to how many parts there are in the "series" that is the contiguum. Proposition XII closes,

... whereby lastly, through the analysis and harmony of similars and dissimilars in some third or fourth degree, or in any that is required, the soul is enabled to acquiesce or rest harmonically and delightedly.

Proposition XIII is concerned with the soul itself, not the contiguum: 1. What is the seat of the soul in the body? The answer is that the soul is diffused throughout the cortical substance. Granting this, is the soul the same wherever it is seated? 2. Is the soul alike in all men? 3. Does the soul consist only of a membrane? 4. Is the soul a simple, or does it contain modes? 5. How to consider the actuality or

the nature of the soul? By analogy? 6. The distinction of the human soul from that of brutes.

459. "We have no reason to despair of arriving at a knowledge of the soul. . . ." If, knowing the problems stated in the general propositions, we should imagine ourselves to be on our own and should try to travel the road alone in a search for the soul, then we might despair. But instead of that, we are guided by Swedenborg, who was about to produce a case history of philosophy, and Swedenborg was no ordinary philosopher. In 1734 there was an internal dictate in him that caused him to write

We have no reason to despair of arriving at a knowledge of the soul, especially if it be no longer regarded as an object of supreme ignorance, and as operating by absolutely unknown laws.

Supreme ignorance is avoided if it is granted: that there are perfections of what is geometrical and mechanical; that "the actuality of the soul consists in a motion and power consummately mechanical... a something perfectly mechanical and geometrical in the nature of things"; if we have proper regard for anatomy; and if we believe in things in ourselves, such as our imagination, our memory, and our will. For Swedenborg there was a condition:

And if it pleases God to accord me life and leisure, it is my intention to show in detail at what stage of the enquiry I have myself arrived.

There follows then a reiteration that the problems raised in the general propositions are not given there as conclusions, but as problems to be solved while the research is conducted:

At present I may observe in general, that I do not think it prudent to make an affirmative or positive declaration on the subject: experience and geometry alone have a right to be affirmative and positive, and when they become so, then, and not till then, by the consent of the soul, the rationale of the subject is declared.

This is immediately followed by what appears as the heading of the next note.

460. "The main end of these our labors will be, to demonstrate the immortality of the soul to the very senses"

In my experience at least, this promise has been largely passed over by commentators on Swedenborg's philosophy. This might be considered a mere matter of words, because "to search for the soul" as it is commonly stated, means to search for the nature of the soul, and *immortality* can be included in its nature. Nevertheless, to have regard for immortality as an aspect of the nature of the soul, is something different from what is sufficient if the soul is considered only to be at one end of a contiguum connecting it with the body. Following the death of the body, it is no longer a question of the seat of the soul in the body, nor of the soul as depending on passive and active relations with the body. The question of immortality raises questions about the soul when it is without the body. Evidently Swedenborg's answers to the question, Is the soul immortal? (Note 457) are incomplete. The treatment of the question must go on.

To the question "is immortality a subject proper to philosophy?" some Christian philosophers answered yes; others answered no. But in any case, immortality has been a part of philosophy at some widely different times. For Plato, immortality is the principal subject of the latter part of *Phaedo*, which describes events during the final hours of the life of Socrates. Gilson explains how Plato's argument is philosophically true in principle, but that Augustine changes Plato's argument and makes God the reason (*The Christian Philosophy of St. Augustine*, pp.5155). At a later time in the history of Christian philosophy, Duns Scotus, offering arguments *pro et contra*, treated of immortality (see Chapter VI of *Philosophical Writings*, Selections Bobbs-Merrill, 1962). In our century Gabriel Marcel, educated as a philosopher, became converted to the Catholic faith. Under the date of February, 1917 of his *Metaphysical Journal*, he wrote "Notes on immortality referring to Abel, Leibnitz, Lodge, and Aristotle" (pp. 132-4). Although we have arrived at the end of subjects treated under the title *The Mechanism of the Intercourse Between the Soul and the Body*, almost three pages remain in the work under the title "Conclusion." They tell us something about Swedenborg as a Christian philosopher in 1734 preparing to make a search for the soul both with regard to its existence in the body and after leaving the body.

461. Concerning Christian Philosophers and Swedenborg as a Christian Philosopher. There is immediate connection between the heading of the previous note and the "Conclusion" of *The Mechanism*.

The main end of these labors will be, to demonstrate the immortality of the soul to the very senses.

CONCLUSION. What is Life, but the commencement, formation and preparation of the soul for the state in which it is to live forever after the body dies? (230).

Immortality refers to eternity. One may wonder, what concern is the subject of eternity to a philosopher? Most readers of *The Infinite* are already indoctrinated to some extent in the Writings where preparation for life after death is referred to as reformation and regeneration. Reformation and regeneration are subjects of religion, not philosophy.¹

In reading beyond the question "What is life?" we notice that the subject changes to how immortality affects men in general, then Christians, then Christian philosophers, and finally the individual Christian philosopher:

Inasmuch then as the soul is formed and prepared in the mortal body for an immortal state, so we men are in this respect the happiest beings in the world, or else the unhappiest; for those who are unhappy, are more unhappy than the brutes, whose souls are extinguished, and their life annihilated, when their bodies perish (pp. 12, 13).

That is general enough to apply to men whether Christian or not. But consider what follows:

Christians again may be still more happy, or still more unhappy: for they possess a knowledge well calculated to lead to faith, and to comparative distinctness and fullness thereof: yet those of them who are unhappy, are more unhappy than the Gentiles to whom no such knowledge has been granted (pp. 12, 13).

¹ Concerning an event in the history of philosophy it is worth noting the following from TCR:

It is related of a certain philosopher of old that he threw himself into the sea because he could not see or comprehend by the light (*lumen*) of his own mind the eternity of the world. What would he have done had he wished to comprehend the infinity of God (TCR 28).

Possibly refers to Cleombrotus. See Introduction to *Phaedo*, p. xi Bobbs-Merrill 1951 edition.

Proceeding further, to a less numerous class among Christians:

Those Christians again who are learned in the divine law, the prelates and doctors of the church, are still more happy, or more unhappy; for those of them who are unhappy, are more unhappy than the rudest members of the Christian community, however defective in learning and poor in knowledge and enlightenment.

As if that were not enough, there is still more narrowing down to those who are

Among the skillful interpreters of the divine law, they again are happier still who have the faculty to engraft reason upon revelation, and to make use of both as means to a knowledge of the things conducing to faith; that is to say, they who are Christian philosophers; who, if unhappy, are more unhappy than those who obtained their knowledge from revelation alone.

There is one more step, because the class of Christian philosophers consists of individuals:

For the more knowledge we possess, the more there is to make us happy, and the more to make us unhappy. Hence the Christian philosopher may be the happiest, or the unhappiest, of mortals.

To speak of individuals can be to speak as if from oneself, that is, to speak of ones own experience. *The Mechanism* as a work on propositions or problems to be engaged in when searching for the soul, is a record of the experience of one who is Christian, who is determined to enter into a philosophical search. Let us remember that while writing *The Mechanism*, Swedenborg was a Christian, without benefit of the Word that is now the Second Coming. So something of the state of mind of Swedenborg the philosopher in 1734 is revealed in the CONCLUSION. This can be regarded as a truism. But then so is it a truism that what one does in his early years is a preparation for what one does in his latter years. Seeing how it is a preparation may well be an important and never-ending challenge when in the early state it is philosophy and in the latter state it is revelation. The connection by preparation can be understood only by comparison of what is known of the philosophical state with what is known of the revelatory state.



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