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Charles Darwin, Henry James, Sr., and “Evolution”

James Duban

This study traces the philosophical theology of Henry James, Sr., from its roots in Swedenborgianism, through the trunk of phenomenalism, into the oddly entwined branches of Darwinism, socialism, and—early on, at least—idealism. I use as a point of inspiration a long-neglected manuscript located among the James Family Papers at the Houghton Library. That collection includes fifty-one folders of manuscript fragments by the elder James. Some are unpublished lectures; others represent correspondence of uncertain destination; still others are rejected draft segments of essays, lectures, or chapters. In 1947 the Houghton listed these materials as “Unidentified MSS and fragments” in a guide titled “Manuscripts Presented by William James: *Compositions of Henry James, 1811-1882.*”¹ Folder 49 holds a manuscript fragment (figure 1) folded multiple times, finally into the shape of a greeting card. The fragment is lengthy because Henry Sr. pasted together pieces of paper in a vertical direction to record his thoughts. A reference to “readers” suggests that Henry Sr. contemplated the fragment’s insertion into some manuscript, perhaps as an elaborative note. To unfold the fragment, in the Houghton Reading Room, one must turn the item sideways, though at some inconvenience to fellow scholars, whose brows furrow at the fosiiform appearance of its eleven links as those keep extending across the four-person reading-table. What unfurls is Henry Sr.’s unpublished response to *The Origin of Species* (1859). The fragment offers a provocative, phenomenalist critique of Darwin by a self-professed socialist steeped in the Christian mysticism of Emanuel Swedenborg.

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¹ Publication of the manuscript fragment, bMS Am 1094.8, item 77, and of excerpts from James’s epistolary manuscripts, is by permission of the Houghton Library, Harvard University, and the literary executor of the James Estate, Mrs. Bay James Baker of Newbury, Mass. Parenthetical abbreviations correspond to the following works of Henry Sr.:

CLC: *Christianity the Logic of Creation* (New York: D. Appleton, 1857);

L&M: *Lectures and Miscellanies* (New York: Redfield, 1852);

LR: *Literary Remains of Henry James*, ed. William James (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1884);

NE: *The Nature of Evil* (New York: D. Appleton, 1855);

SC: *Spiritual Creation* (MS. 1882), in LR;

“SH”: “Stirling’s Secret of Hegel,” *North American Review*, 102 (1866): 264-75;

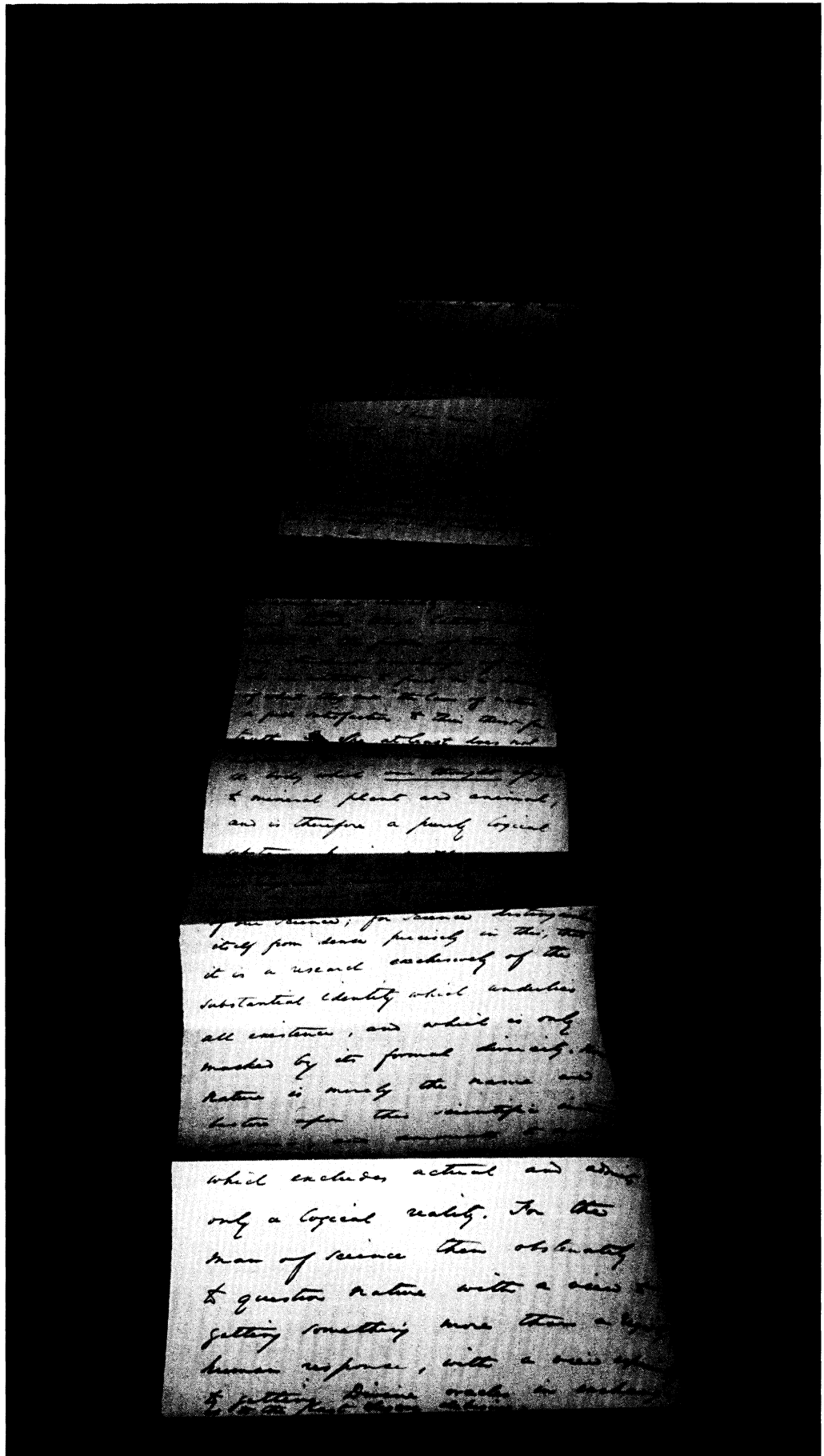
“SPRC”: “Some Personal Recollections of Carlyle,” *Atlantic Monthly* 47 (1881): 593-609;

SRFM: *Society the Redeemed Form of Man, and the Earnest of God’s Omnipotence in Human Nature* (Boston: Houghton, Osgood, and Co., 1879);

SS: *The Secret of Swedenborg: Being an Elucidation of His Doctrine of the Divine Natural Humanity* (Boston: Fields, Osgood, 1869);

SSh: *Substance and Shadow: or Morality and Religion in their Relation to Life: A Essay Upon the Physics of Creation* (Boston: Ticknor and Fields, 1863);

“WSWH”: “Works of Sir William Hamilton,” *Putnam’s Monthly Magazine* 2 (1853): 470-81.



Henry Sr.'s manuscript response to Charles Darwin's *The Origin of Species* (1859). James Family Papers. Courtesy of the Houghton Library.

Apparently written contemporaneously with *The Origin of Species*, the fragment's extensive response to "a lively controversy . . . now going on" defines the philosophical premise behind Henry Sr.'s much later dismissal of "natural evolution" in *Society the Redeemed Form of Man* (1879) and in his posthumously published *Spiritual Creation*. The former of those works faults Darwin and Spencer for overlooking the "strictly metaphysical" dimension of "man's natural genesis," inasmuch as "natural evolution . . . serves as a matrix for our subsequent spiritual or individual conjunction with infinite goodness and truth" (*SRFM*, pp. 158-59). According to Henry Sr. in *Spiritual Creation*, such exclusive attention to natural evolution obscures humanity's capacity to apprehend its own spiritual evolution towards the authentic state of *Being* implied by socialistic union with one's "fellow-man" (*SC*, p. 279). With logic traceable to the much earlier and more detailed phenomenalist speculations about Darwin in the manuscript fragment, *Spiritual Creation* faults scientists like Darwin and Huxley for "look[ing] upon the world of space and time, or nature and history, as possessing a grim objective reality of its own, in strict independence of its relation to the human mind" (*SC*, p. 280). Since Henry Sr. deems that same epistemological flaw subversive of all but a socialistic state of existence, the phenomenism of the manuscript fragment provides better access to the evolution of his "social science."²

Prior to 1859, as we shall see, Henry Sr. had extrapolated a self-described doctrine of "communism" from Swedenborgian visions of angelic cooperation. Accustomed, moreover, to using the word "evolution" to describe spiritual and social growth (*CLC*, p. 166; *NE*, pp. 337, 341), he predictably came to regard Darwin's account of natural selection as a conceptual impediment to that communal harmony. Whatever the underlying biological unity of species, their apparently fierce competition for survival struck Henry Sr. as a crassly naturalistic—and therefore materialistic—model for human community. This is why phenomenism—that theory which displaces actual knowledge of material objects with the mind's apprehension of mere sensory phenomena—figures so importantly in Henry Sr.'s published works. For related reasons, the challenge to Darwinism in the manuscript fragment clarifies Henry Sr.'s use of phenomenism

² Surprisingly little scholarship exists about the importance of Darwin for Henry Sr. With exclusive reference to *SRFM*, C. Hartley Grattan, in *The Three Jameses: A Family of Minds* (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1932), remarked that Henry Sr. "was philosophically incapable of ingesting the most distinctive doctrine of nineteenth century biology: evolution" (p. 99). Whereas Grattan claims that Henry Sr. substituted a contrary dogmatism for that allegedly held by Darwin, I hold that Henry Sr. actually co-opted evolutionary theory to render Darwin as moot as the phenomenalist forms described in the manuscript fragment. My study of the manuscript fragment and its importance for Henry Sr.'s published views about naturalism seeks to "complicate" the theological achievement of Henry Sr., as rendered by William James in his discussion of Henry Sr.'s phenomenism, anthropomorphism, and metaphysics (*LR*, p. 115) and to supplement the accounts of Henry Sr.'s intellectual development in Austin Warren, *The Elder Henry James* (New York: Macmillan, 1934); Ralph Barton Perry, *The Thought and Character of William James*, 2 vols. (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1935), 1:3-166; F. O. Matthiessen, *The James*

Family (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1947); Frederic Harold Young, *The Philosophy of Henry James, Sr.* (New York: Bookman Associates, 1951); Dwight W. Hoover, *Henry James, Sr. and the Religion of Community* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1969); Giles Gunn, "Introduction" to *Henry James, Senior: A Selection of His Writings*, ed. Giles Gunn (Chicago: American Library Association, 1974), 3-29; John Owen King III, *The Iron of Melancholy: Structures of Spiritual Conversion in America from the Puritan Conscience to Victorian Neurosis* (Middletown, Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press, 1983), 83-140; Katherine Weissbourd, *Growing Up in the James Family: Henry James, Sr., as Son and Father* (Ann Arbor, Michigan: UMI Research Press, 1985); R. W. B. Lewis, *The Jameses: A Family Narrative* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1991); Howard M. Feinstein, *Becoming William James* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1984), 25-100; Alfred Habegger, *The Father: A Life of Henry James, Sr.* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1994); and Carol Holly, *Intensely Family: The Inheritance of Family Shame and the Autobiographies of Henry James* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1995).

in the published writings to evolve the superstructure of “social science” from an insubstantial naturalistic base.

Indeed, as pondered by Henry Sr., in such treatises as *Substance and Shadow* (1863) and *The Secret of Swedenborg* (1869), both nature and human identity are provisional functions of perception. By virtue of their phenomenalist lack of Being, or substance, both are the essentially vacuous forms or shadows into which divine—that is to say, infinite, eternal, and therefore uncreated or underived—Being “communicates” itself in the act of spiritual, by which Henry Sr. means *genuine*, creation. Prior to the publication of *The Origin of Species*, that neo-Platonic assumption informed Henry Sr.’s 1853 critique of Sir William Hamilton (“WSWH,” p. 479) as well as the relation between phenomenism and creation that Henry Sr. posits in most sections of *Christianity the Logic of Creation* (1857).³ After 1859, a related epistemology allowed Henry Sr. to dismiss the significance of progressively developed anatomical connections among species: evolution, as such, merely reflected the variations among the phenomenalist forms that we call Nature.

These outlooks imply an important distinction between “making” and “creating.” Henry Sr. suggests that God *makes* phenomenalist forms in order to communicate uncreated divine Being or substance to them as part of their spiritual—that is, their only real—*creation*. Before 1859, Henry Sr. referred to this process of authentication as an “endless spiritual development” that stood related to the “evolving” “spiritual sense,” or “man’s natural evolution.” As this rhetoric intimates, views like those of Darwin were already current, as were competing notions about “The Religion of Geology.” Perhaps influenced by such matters in a chapter of Edward Beecher’s *The Conflict of Ages* (1853)—to which Henry Sr.’s *The Nature of Evil* (1855) is an epistolary response—Henry Sr. distinguished in 1857 between the “evolution of human form, which is the sole spiritual form known to the universe,” and animal forms, which God could never “create, or give being to” because those “are utterly devoid of spiritual consciousness” (*CLC*, pp. 81, 3, 119, 170; cf. 108–13).⁴ Unlike “the stoutest champions of orthodoxy,” therefore, Henry Sr. claimed in 1855 to be undaunted by “every flippant . . . geological tyro” (*NE*, p. 296). To this extent, Henry Sr. was poised for Darwin. After 1859, Henry Sr. channeled a rather selective phenomenalist outlook on creation into a far more emphatic theory of spiritual evolution: it con-

³ The general tenor of *CLC* is phenomenalist in its insistence that “THE NATURAL WORLD” is “*the world of appearances or phenomena*” (p. 26; cf. p. 79) and that “the natural man . . . possesses only a phenomenal life” (p. 124). Still, prior to encountering *The Origin of Species*, Henry Sr. does not advance a rigorous phenomenism: in *CLC* he refers to the “reality” of “consciousness” (p. 89), calls mineral and animal life “real” (p. 91), and states that nature’s “personality is not a phenomenon of sense” (p. 93). Henry Sr.’s post-Darwinian emphasis on the creator’s involution into the *totally* vacant forms of nature and personality would demand—with respect to ideas about spiritual creation and redemption—a far more emphatic phenomenism.

⁴ In Chapter Eight of Beecher’s *The Conflict of Ages* (Boston: Phillips, Sampson, and Co., 1853), Henry Sr. would have encountered quotations from Edward Hitchcock’s influential *The Religion of Geology* (1851)

and from John Pye Smith’s *On the Relations between the Holy Scriptures and Some Parts of Geological Science* (1840). Though espousing a far different sense of Divine redemption than that advocated by Henry Sr., Beecher uses the word “evolution” (pp. 483, 485) to connote the “development” of Divine excellence through a process of redemption. For Darwin’s being “in the air,” with respect to Hitchcock, Smith, and others, see Conrad Wright, “The Religion of Geology,” *New England Quarterly*, 14 (1941), 335–58; Chapter Three of Milton Millhauser, *Just Before Darwin: Robert Chambers and Vestiges* (Middletown Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 1959); Bentley Glass, Owsei Temkin, and William L. Straus, eds., *Forerunners of Darwin* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1959). See, for an example of Henry Sr.’s anticipation of Darwin, King, *Iron*, 127.

tinued to elevate the idea of origins while implying the development of real community—that is to say socialism—out of the illusion of human identity.

Henry Sr. deemed man's formative identity spectral because the experience of conscience or moral consciousness, that is, the sense of autonomous selfhood, comprises the specious, though commonly shared, "provisional base" of human identity prior to the spiritual evolution of that phenomenon towards the substantial identity and community of socialistic Being. For Henry Sr., who saw fit to adapt New Science terminology to spiritual ends, divine involution/incarnation into the phenomenalistic forms of nature and human identity occasions their redemptive evolution into a socialistic state, itself the divine end of history and the embodiment of the true Being that will constitute the Divine Natural Humanity (*CLC*, pp. 147, 220; *SSh*, pp. 53-136, 262-64, 385-426; *SS*, pp. 30-185; *SRFM*, pp. 7, 9 [quoted], 103, 212-13, 329; *SC*, pp. 358, 394). Because Henry Sr. associates that society with the "harmonic association" of Swedenborg's angels (*CLC*, p. 126; cf. pp. 144, 231), his conception of socialism, unlike twentieth-century communism, is implicitly spiritual.

These contexts, featured in Henry Sr.'s published works, inform the manuscript fragment's anti-materialistic critique of Darwin. More importantly, the post-1859 published ideas, which sometimes appropriate Darwinian rhetoric without naming Darwin, may have evolved in several important respects from the theorizing about Darwin in that fragment. The manuscript fragment is also significant for its suggestions about a relation between spiritual evolution and political revolution. Granted, Henry Sr.'s socialism is mainly linked to the peaceful associationism imported to America by disciples of Charles Fourier; in 1848, following the demise of Brook Farm, James himself pledged \$5,000 to the Phalansterian Realization Fund Society. Still, Henry Sr.'s interests transcended this enamorment of Christian Socialism, or what one of his commentators prefers to call "Spiritual Socialism." In the 1840s and much later, Henry Sr. was cognizant of—and apparently receptive to—more global sentiments about socialism. In 1849, for instance, he felt optimistic about the 1848 socialistic upheaval in France; and by 1879, though without deeming Marxism worthy of mention, Henry Sr. referred to the "dependent class" as "proletaries" (*SRFM*, p. 423). Although Henry Sr. evokes that term in its most Roman sense of serving the state with offspring rather than with property, the timing of the remark is suggestive, given Henry Sr.'s transatlantic sojourns and socialistic outlook.⁵ Granted, Henry Sr. would never have condoned the blatant historical materialism of Marx or Engels, but he chanced to join them in deeming socialism—albeit his spiritual vision of that outlook—as the evolutionary end of human thought and history. As developed over time, therefore, the idea of "evolution" in the political ethics

⁵ On Henry Sr. and associationism, see Habegger, *Father*, 248, 265, 282-87; Perry, *Thought and Character*, 1:20-38. On Henry Sr.'s support for the French Revolution of 1848, see Habegger, *Father*, 266-67. For Marx's ties to the French Revolution of 1848, see William Edward Hartpole Lecky, *Democracy and Liberty*, ed. William Murchison, 2 vols. (1896; rpt. Indianapolis, Indiana: Liberty Classics, 1981), 2:245. On the origins and political application of "proletarian," see *The Oxford Dictionary of English Etymology*, ed. C. T. Onions (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1966), 714,

and, of course, *The Communist Manifesto* (1848). In offering occasional reflections upon the pertinence of Marxism for the thinking of Henry Sr., I follow Young, *Philosophy*, who, while rejecting the classification of "Christian Socialism" as an entirely fitting characterization of Henry Sr.'s apocalyptic "Spiritual Socialism," relates Henry Sr.'s outlook to a spectrum of thought spanning Fourieristic associationism (pp. 17-18) through a romantic tradition culminating in "Marx's dream of a classless society" (p. 71).

and epistemology of Henry Sr. becomes revolutionary in tendency, though not in advocacy (SS, pp. 40, 72, 111; *SRFM*, p. 329).

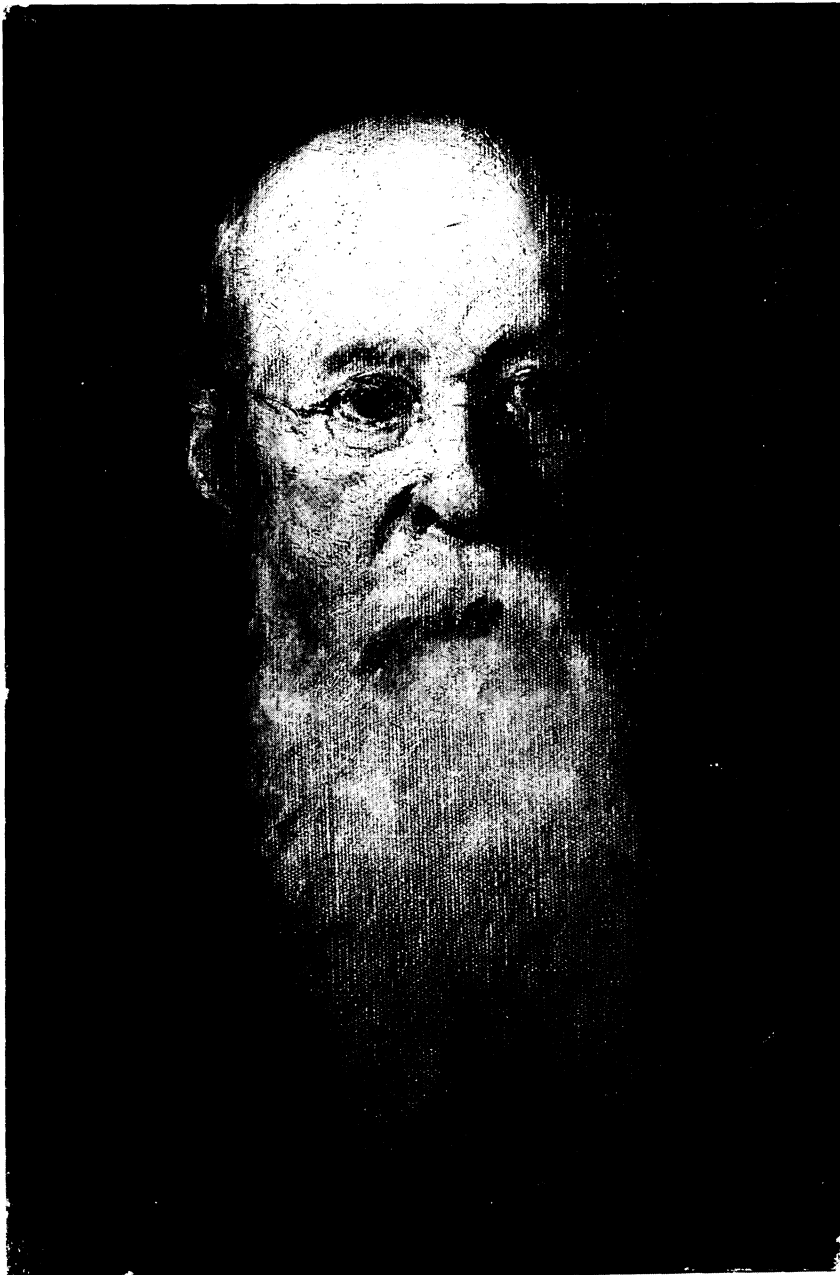
Undergirding Henry Sr.'s Christian socialism is his career-long quasi-Transcendental romance with the emphatically spiritual dimensions of Swedenborgian outlooks on communal harmony and love. Swedenborg (1688-1772) sought in his spiritual writings, most importantly his multi-volume *Arcana Coelestia* (1749-56), his *The Worship and Love of God* (1745), and *The True Christian Religion* (1771) to overcome the Cartesian dualism of body and soul through a celebration of "correspondences" between the natural and spiritual worlds. For Swedenborg, all such correspondences evolved from an emanation of divine thought culminating in *Maximus Homo*, a union of spirits, angels, and humanity cosmically joined in bodily shape and illustrating universal love. Indebted to the idealism of Nicolaus Malebranche, to Leibniz's theory of "*harmonia praestabilita*," and to Christian Wolff's notion of a universal language emerging out of a system of *philosophia mathematica universalium*, Swedenborg's conception of *Maximus Homo* featured "spiritual societies" transcending individual selfishness. That angelic state of universal, communal love—the revolutionary implications of which Andrew W. Carnegie noted in his turn-of-the-century critique of communism—is one of the Swedenborgian emphases that Henry Sr. channeled into a theory of Christian socialism.⁶

Crucial to this and to other dimensions of Henry Sr.'s thinking is the Swedenborgian "doctrine of series and degrees"; it spiritualized the natural world by implying that "there is nothing in the entire universe that does not belong to a series or represent a degree in a series, with the exception of the first substance of nature."⁷ In the writings of Henry Sr., that Swedenborgian correspondence between the spiritual and natural worlds finds reiteration in the belief—and Henry Sr. here quotes Swedenborg—"the ultimate of divine order is *in the nature of the world*." This sentiment implies a continuity between spirit and nature compatible with Henry Sr.'s view of redemption as the infusion of creative Being into the forms of nature; that process rescues humanity from its "temporary phenomenal dimensions" by imparting "universal unity" to vacuous individualism (SC, pp. 283, 346; cf. p. 322). Here and elsewhere, Henry Sr.'s socialistic appropriation of Swedenborgian ideas about spiritual degrees and creation has pertinence for the response to Darwin in the manuscript fragment. Insofar as Henry Sr.'s political outlook on "spiritual evolution" corresponds to the epistemology of Henry Sr.'s labored encounter with Darwin's *Origin of Species* in the manuscript

⁶ See Inge Jonsson, *Emanuel Swedenborg*, trans. Catherine Djurklou (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1971), esp. 58, 64, 66 (quoted), 72-73, 88, 92-98, 117, 132, 144, 146, 150; Signe Toksvig, *Emanuel Swedenborg: Scientist and Mystic* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1948). For Swedenborg's Grand Man, see *The Spiritual Diary of Emanuel Swedenborg*, ed. Rev. James F. Buss; trans. George Bush, M.A., 5 vols. (London: James Speirs: 1883-1902), 3:52, 248, 277-78. On communism and the revolutionary tendencies of Swedenborg's angels, see Carnegie's *The Gospel of Wealth and Other Timely Essays* (New York: Century Co., 1900), 6-7. In a different but related vein, see Eugene Taylor's discussion of Swedenborg and William James, especially with regard to the "evolutionary transformation of consciousness" implied by William's "radical empiricism": "William

James on Darwin: An Evolutionary Theory of Consciousness," *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences* 602 (1990): 18-19. Insofar as William believed that "radical empiricism asserted that reality and the field of consciousness were co-mingled" (Taylor, p. 26), the phenomenalism of Henry Sr.'s manuscript fragment appears to have implications for William's psychological and moral uses of Darwinian theory. See, in this vein, Robert J. Richards, *Darwin and the Emergence of Evolutionary Theories of Mind and Behavior* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1987), 409-50. The concerns of the manuscript fragment may also cast light upon William's effort, in a Darwinian age, to negotiate the worlds of theism and positivism (see Feinstein, *Becoming*, 298-99).

⁷ Jonsson, *Emanuel Swedenborg*, 71-77 (p. 72 quoted).



Henry James, Sr. Portrait by Frank Duveneck, 1882. Portrait Collection, Harvard University Art Museums. Courtesy of Harvard University Art Museums.

fragment, that document offers a fresh perspective from which to view the relation of Darwinism to various expressions of nineteenth-century socialism, whether local or international.

Although the nineteenth-century backlash to Darwin was varied, the union of Swedenborgian mysticism and “social science” in the thinking of Henry Sr. sets him apart from critics of Darwin like Louis Agassiz, Adam Sedgwick, and Sir Richard Owen. They took issue with the “unflinching materialism” of Darwin’s challenge to a six-day creation and to cherished ideas—reflecting divine order, design, and antecedent final causes—about the fixity and permanence of species. They thought that God had created a finite number of species, a number that had remained constant through time. Similar objections to Darwinian ideas came from Pope Pius IX, from Cardinal Manning, from Monseigneur Ségur, and from Dr. Perry, Lord Bishop of Melbourne. They denounced the pride entailed in

Darwin's "brutal" theory of evolution and assailed the relegation of Adam and Eve to the status of apes. Henry Sr. in his manuscript fragment seeks to render moot the outlooks of Darwin and his theological critics, alike, through a phenomenalist, quasi-idealistic reply to *The Origin of Species*.⁸ Henry Sr.'s encounter with "phenomenalism" therefore merits elaboration.

"Evolution," as represented in Henry Sr.'s manuscript fragment, links phenomenism and idealism. To the extent, however, that the manuscript fragment teeters in the direction of idealism, it does so apart from theories of absolute idealism, or the non-entity of matter, as derived from Kant by Fichte, Schelling, and Hegel. Rather, the manuscript advances a form of immaterialism approaching Berkeley's belief that substance cannot be said to exist save as phenomena perceived by human consciousness. Berkeley's idealism therefore featured a phenomenalist premise: "the 'observed' existence of established aggregates of phenomena of sense, actual and potential, commonly called 'things,' is acknowledged; but a 'sense-substance' abstracted out of all relation to a percipient is rejected as meaningless, if not self-contradictory."⁹ A related phenomenism allowed Henry Sr. to reconceive creation and evolution: insofar as he deemed both to reflect the psychic development of humanity—something of a "Natural History of Intellect," if we may borrow an Emersonian phrase—he dismissed the empirical reality and importance of either a six-day creation or the evolutionary origin of species. As explained in his manuscript fragment, the development of species mirrors nature's status as "a strict evolution of the human mind, . . . utterly destitute of any basis outside of consciousness." As we shall see, this novel outlook on "evolution"—extrapolated from Swedenborg's eighteenth-century theory of correspondences—comprises a missing link to Henry Sr.'s published thoughts about the relation of the so-called "New Science" to a Divine Natural Humanity "evolving" in thought and social organization towards socialism.

The fragment, which appears to have been connected to a discussion of subjectivism, reads as follows:

objectivity, or an existence only to our thought; while the mountain, the tree, the horse have an actual objectivity, or an existence to sense. What is the inference? Why, evidently, it is and can be nothing else than this, namely: that if on the one hand whatsoever sensibly exists claims in order to such existence a natural or generic identity with all other things; and if on the other hand this natural or generic identity of all existence is itself not an actual but only a logical or rational quantity; then clearly whatsoever sensibly exists disclaims any reality beyond sense, confesses itself of a purely phenomenal quality, and refers its

⁸ See Ernst Mayr, "Agassiz, Darwin, and Evolution," *Harvard Library Bulletin* 13 (1959): 165-94; John Herman Randall, Jr., "The Changing Impact of Darwin on Philosophy," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 22 (1961): 449-52. Philip Appleman, ed., *Darwin* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1970), offers a collection of, and authorial attribution for, contemporary responses to Darwin, including those of Sedgwick and Owen (pp. 292-98; p. 294, quoted). For Pope Pius IX, Cardinal Manning, Dr. Perry, and Monseigneur Ségur, see Andrew Dickson White, *A History of the Warfare of Science with Theology in Christendom*, 2 vols. (1898; rpt. New York: 1936), 1:71-75.

⁹ Alexander Campbell Fraser, *Selections from Berkeley*, ed. Alexander Campbell Fraser, 4th edition, revised

(Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1891), 67n. In Berkeley's words, "if the word *substance* be taken in the vulgar sense—for a combination of sensible qualities, such as extension, solidity, weight, and the like—this we cannot be accused of taking away; but if it be taken in a philosophic sense—for the support of accidents or qualities without the mind—then indeed I acknowledge that we take it away, if one may be said to take away that which never had any existence, not even in the imagination" (*Selections*, p. 67). Also see, with respect to my terminology, H. B. Acton, "Idealism," and R. J. Hirst, "Phenomenalism," in Paul Edwards, ed., *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, 4 vols. (New York: Macmillan, 1967), 4:112; 6:130-35.

substance wholly to man. Let my reader clearly understand me here. What I say is: that if this natural or generic element in all existence to which we rationally attribute it's [*sic*] specific form or appearance, is utterly devoid of actuality, has no existence to our senses but only to our thought, and hence no objectivity underived from our subjectivity; why then evidently the specific element in all existence which we necessarily assign to this as its source turns out in spite of its apparent absoluteness the mere phenomenon of our senses, and mineral plant and animal confess themselves forthwith nothing but the subject and necessary contents or furniture of our natural subjectivity.

A lively controversy is now going on among naturalists in regard to what they call "the origin of species"; but it is a purely scientific controversy without any direct philosophic issues. The question debated is whether species obey a natural law of development, each being an accidental modification of some prior and broader species, or whether they are so many original and distinct exhibitions of creative power. The question generates any amount of scientific ratiocination (or what in scripture symbolism is called "gnashing of the teeth"), because like all scientific questions it admits only of an approximate solution, being dependent for settlement upon an endless array of counter probabilities on either side. The chiefs on both sides persistently ignore—and this ignorance by the way constitutes the unrecognized strength of the distinctively scientific understanding—that nature itself is a strict evolution of the human mind, being utterly destitute of any basis outside of consciousness, and hence incapable of determining questions of cosmical or creative order. They may settle the question about which their curiosity has grown so inflamed, as they will: the settlement will reach no further than to illustrate some law of the human mind, and will consequently cast no direct but only reflected light upon the question of creation. Technical "men of science" seem the most hopelessly backward as to philosophic tendencies of any men of our time; for whenever any one of them steps forth like Mr. Darwin to hint ever so timidly that we have no evidence of God's power having ever been directly exerted upon nature, he instantly challenges such distinction above his brethren and necessarily argues their intellectual average to be very low.

I have never been deluded by the hope which so many persons cherish in regard to the positive benefits accruing to the intellect from science. On the contrary it has always seemed to me that the service conferred by sciences upon the intellect was emphatically a negative one, consisting in its gradually disenchanting us of the old religious prejudice which makes the relation between God and the soul a moral or personal one, and so preparing us for the philosophic conception of the relation as being a strictly spiritual and creative one. I conceive that any old dame who devoutly reads her bible, even at the risk of accepting all its wonders as literally true, has a much better though latent intellectual relation to the future of thought, than our sturdiest nurslings of science who are content to find in a knowledge of what they call "the laws of nature" a full satisfaction to their thirst for truth. She at least does not actively misapprehend the role which nature plays in creation, while they habitually do. For nature is merely the body which our thought assigns to mineral plant and animal, and is therefore a purely logical substance having neither existence nor function out of relation to our intelligence. If everything our senses discern did not possess to our intelligence an objective identity with every thing else in spite of its subjective diversity, it could never face within the range of our science; for science distinguishes itself from sense precisely in this, that it is a research exclusively of the substantial identity which underlies all existence, and which is only masked by its formal diversity. Now nature is merely the name we bestow upon this scientific instinct of ours, and amounts to nothing more than a mental generalization, which excludes actual and admits only a logical reality. For the man of science then obstinately to question nature with a view to getting something more than a rigidly human response, with a view especially to getting Divine oracles in exchange, is to the last degree delusive.

This phenomenological response to Darwin is consonant with Henry Sr.'s thinking both before and after publication of *The Origin of Species*. Similar attacks upon materialism exist in Henry Sr.'s advocacy of idealism in *Lectures and Miscellanies* (1852), in his quarrel with "Naturalism" in *Christianity the Logic of Creation*, in his contemptuous equation of Naturalism with theological creationism in *The Nature of Evil* (1855), in his challenge to the New Science in *Substance and Shadow: or Morality and Religion in their Relation to Life: An Essay Upon the Physics of Creation*, in his critique of Huxley in *The Secret of Swedenborg*, and in his frustration over materialistic views on evolution in both *Society the Redeemed Form of Man* and *Spiritual Creation*. Each of these works also illustrates Henry Sr.'s career-long effort to channel Swedenborg's notion of Divine Natural Humanity into a this-worldly utopia that would result from the evolution of the moral self-righteousness and personal merit into the broad-based love Henry Sr. associates with socialism.

As remarked, Henry Sr.'s effort to reconcile evolution and intellectual development differs in some important respects from related endeavors of Marx, Lenin, and Trotsky, who "postulated existence as an irreversible process in time, each stage leading on to the next by the 'dialectical' mechanism of conflict and the reconciliation of opposites in a higher synthesis." (Little wonder that Marx offered to dedicate the English edition of *Das Kapital* to Darwin.) Unlike the socialism of Henry Sr., theirs was entirely naturalistic in its repudiation of "any supernatural basis and any Absolute."¹⁰ The difference derives, in part, from Henry Sr.'s rejection of naturalism and "natural selection" in favor of the spiritual "communism" that James inferred from Swedenborg's celebration of the "common good" among angels.

Pertinent, indeed, to James's socialistic aversion to natural selection as a means of survival and advancement in capitalist society is Swedenborg's description of the selflessness and communal love of angels. In a passage of *Arcana Coelestia* that Henry Sr. marked, Swedenborg stated that "in the heavens there is a communion of all goods; the peace, intelligence, wisdom, and happiness of all, are communicated to every one there, and those of every one are communicated to all."¹¹ In that description of angels, Henry Sr. found confirmation for his belief that love and brotherhood are the final end of social organization—specifically a socialistic organization infused with spirit, and therefore compatible with Christianity. Despite the imperfections of Swedenborg's Angels—brought about by their adherence to a compulsory moral, as opposed to a disinterestedly spiritual culture, and by their total exclusion of self-love, as opposed to a far preferable and uniquely human capacity to reconcile self-love and Divine Love (*SRFM*, p. 308; *CLC*, p. 200)—they appeared to Henry Sr. to live an enviable life of Communism. Thus, with reference to the above-quoted passage in *Arcana Coelestia* about angelic communion, Henry Sr. inscribed the following on the title-page of that volume: "Communism the law of heaven" (figure 3).¹²

¹⁰ Julian Huxley, in T. H. Huxley and Julian Huxley, *Touchstone for Ethics: 1893-1943* (New York and London: Harper and Brothers, 1947), 26. On Marx's dedication offer, see Howard E. Gruber, "Darwin and *Das Kapital*," *Isis* 52 (1961): 582-83.

¹¹ *Arcana Coelestia. The Heavenly Arcana which are Contained in the Holy Scriptures or Word of the Lord, Unfolded* (London: James S. Hodson, 1840), 12:523. With gratitude

to the Swedenborg School of Religion Library, Newton, Massachusetts, I quote from one of Henry Sr.'s personal, annotated volumes of the London edition begun in 1837. (Henry Sr. owned and annotated volumes of *Arcana Coelestia* from several editions.) Also see the emphasis upon "the common good" in angelic society, in *The Spiritual Diary*, 1:91; 2:146-47; 3:272, 418.

see 1020/ for some more characterizing expressions on regeneration. The man of the church at this day studies ARCANA COELESTIA. much the quality of faith, but with its source of love.

THE

HEAVENLY ARCANAE

See 9199 & 9215 for the Lord making himself the Divine Good

WHICH ARE CONTAINED IN

THE HOLY SCRIPTURES OR WORD

OF THE LORD

Communism UNFOLDED, in Law of heaven

BEGINNING WITH THE BOOK OF GENESIS. 10.723

TOGETHER WITH

WONDERFUL THINGS SEEN IN THE WORLD OF SPIRITS

AND IN THE HEAVEN OF ANGELS.

BY

EMANUEL SWEDENBORG.

By an angel Hyde 786

in the word is VOL XII.

signifies something

of the Lord. 11.157

LONDON:

JAMES S. HODSON, 112, FLEET STREET;

WILLIAM NEWBERY, CHENIES STREET, BEDFORD SQUARE;

EDWARD BAYLIS, MANCHESTER.

1840.

See 10.758 for the alarm of spirits at the bare idea of being reunited to their material body, and their disgust at their former state hid. to in this subject.

Title-page to Henry Sr.'s personal, annotated copy of Swedenborg's Arcana Coelestia, Volume 12. Courtesy of the Swedenborg School of Religion, Newton, Mass.

12 Here and below, Henry Sr.'s sociological invocation of "communism" should be distinguished from his occasional, mainly early use of the word to characterize "communistic and formless nature," or "natural communism"—that is, the undifferentiated forms in "the total community of nature" that lack self-reflective consciousness (CLC, pp. 92, 146, 91; cf. SS, p. 142). Still, Henry Sr.'s early and later uses of term "communism" correspond: the suggestion, in 1857, that "we ourselves

involve the mineral consciousness" (CLC, p. 89) and that "sensuous evolutions of the me" are "latent in the mineral" (CLC, 91) implies that Henry Sr. would have been rhetorically and conceptually primed to respond—through a refined outlook of phenomenalism linked to the rhetoric of "involution" and "spiritual evolution"—to the crisis in socialistic "science" represented by Darwin's views of natural selection and "origins."

For Henry Sr., that affinity of social science and the religious impulse is traceable to a vital assumption: "human society or fellowship precedes all government, as the soul precedes the body" (*NE*, p. 96). Therefore, Henry Sr.'s vision of socialism necessarily differs from the historical materialism which Marx forged from Hegelian views of history. Whereas Marx refused to carry the ideological baggage of art, religion, and philosophy into the progressive achievements of the social state, Henry Sr. sees the artist as the incarnation of Divine Humanity and equates the religious sentiment with a universal love that alone allows the Divine Humanity to achieve its fruition through the evolution of socialism.¹³ For Henry Sr., the evolution of communal harmony thus precludes an ethic governed by natural selection. As he wrote in 1881, Darwin's emphasis on "the principle of natural selection" in the animal kingdom had for its theological and social correlates, "*Might makes right, and Devil take the hindmost*" ("*SPRC*," p. 606).¹⁴

Henry Sr. wished, instead, to incarnate the apparent communism of Swedenborg's angels into a this-worldly state; that infusion of spiritualism into sublunary life would, for Henry Sr., redeem the mechanistic and merely "natural" impulses that he lamented in the socialism of Fourier. To that end, Henry Sr. channeled the eighteenth-century mysticism of Swedenborg into nineteenth-century theories of socialism. Uniting a Calvinistic emphasis on the Fall with a utopian vision of human potential, Henry Sr. regarded human equality and communitarianism as the consummate social forms of spiritual Being and as akin to efficacious grace. Thus, despite his belief in a Divine Natural Humanity, Henry Sr. rejected preconceptions about human regeneracy current among other nineteenth-century socialists, Christian or otherwise. In 1856, Henry Sr. regarded the "normal phenomenon of human nature" as needing an infusion of "a most real Divine operation." For him, that communication of the "real" was implicitly social—that is, the outcome a scientifically reorganized society culminating in a Divine Humanity. That is why he eventually refers to "a social or regenerate tendency in our nature" (p. 407) in his aptly titled *Society the Redeemed Form of Man, and the Earnest of God's Omnipotence in Human Nature*. That regenerate state would be one of universal love that eliminated capitalist impediments to spontaneous expressions of charity, creativity, and fellow-feeling.¹⁵ This embodiment of human perfection in a social manifestation of divine Being would be the inevitable outcome of a spiritual evolution emerging from a necessarily phenomenalistic, quasi-idealistic base.

¹³ See Henry Sr.'s "Universality in Art," in *L&M*, 101-36. For Marx and Hegel, see Randall, "Changing Impact," 438, 441; Acton, "Idealism," 115. In the face of public criticism, Henry Sr. distanced himself from his era's political radicals. See, Habegger, *Father*, 331-39, 369, who also, 313, 316, points up the inconsistencies between Henry Sr.'s privileged life and socialistic speculations.

¹⁴ William James, on the other hand, sought to reconcile Natural Selection and human community, since he held that "Natural Selection . . . in its action upon man, singles out for preservation those communities whose social qualities are most complete, those whose intellectual superiority enables them to be most independent of the external world" (quoted in Taylor, "William James," 13-14). Since William illustrates this point with reference to Alfred R. Wallace's thoughts about the survival of people lacking "perfect limbs or other organs" ("Wallace's *Origin of Human Races*," *North American Review*, 101 [1865]: 262; see Taylor, "William James," 13), William

probably reflected upon family circumstance (see Habegger, *Father*, 66-83, for an account of Henry Sr.'s leg amputation) to bridge the worlds of Natural Selection and social harmony. See, with respect to that balance, Richards, *Darwin*, 446, 449, on altruism and self-preservation in the evolutionary outlook of William.

¹⁵ For the Calvinistic context of Henry Sr. on "Divine operation," see Young, *Philosophy*, 302, who quotes the expanded, 1856 edition of Henry Sr.'s *The Church of Christ Not an Ecclesiasticism* (1854). On the foundations of Henry Sr.'s latent Calvinism, see Perry, *Thought and Character*, 1:3-19; King, *Iron*, 83-140; Feinstein, *Becoming*, 79, 87-88; Habegger, *Father*, 164-69, 179-83; Holly, *Intensely Family*, 20-24. For Henry Sr.'s aversion to the naturalistic—and therefore mechanistic and materialistic—socialism of Fourier, intermixed with the doctrines of St. Simon, Comte, Proudhon, and others, see Feinstein, *Becoming*, 83; Habegger, *Father*, 369-70; Young, *Philosophy*, 17-18, 70-76, 298-302.

The qualified idealism featured in Henry Sr.'s socialism and in his fragmentary response to Darwin is traceable to his mid-century writings. Following W. H. Channing's hostile review of *Moralism and Christianity* (1850), Henry Sr. wrote, "it is a miracle that you should have omitted the charge of Idealism, which would have had some faint show of truth."¹⁶ Three years later, that idealism would help unite the concerns of Henry Sr.'s *Lectures and Miscellanies* (1852). Speaking in the third person in the "Preface" to that volume, Henry Sr. equates the subjective grounds of existence with the "truth" upon which "the entire worth of his speculations depends." Indeed, at that stage of his philosophical career, Henry Sr. found support for his advocacy of a Divine Humanity in a union of Berkeleyan idealism and phenomenalism; as he remarks in a chapter titled "Berkeley and His Critics,"

Idealism does nothing but assert the purely phenomenal nature of material things. I must hold to this conclusion, because I insist upon God's essential *humanity*, and upon man consequently as His only true creature. Whatever exists else, exists only in subordination to man, is included in his existence. Thus the entire realm of nature, or the universe of time and space, is involved in his proper subjectivity. (*L&M*, p. 339)

Phrased antinomically, "if the objective sphere of human existence is material, or external to the subjective, then the relation of God to man is of course external. . . ." (*L&M*, p. ix). Here and elsewhere, Henry Sr. is unwilling to abdicate humanity's divine destiny through epistemological concession to materialists.

With respect to Henry Sr.'s manuscript fragment, the crucial point is this: in *Lectures and Miscellanies* the concept of a Divine Humanity rises or falls with the same phenomenalism that inspires Henry Sr.'s later rejection of Darwinian empiricism. In the manuscript fragment, Henry Sr. assails the unfortunate assault of science upon the religious sentiment, which sentiment he deems less moral and personal than broadly spiritual—that is, "creative"—in tendency. That suggestion, in turn, coincides with his claim elsewhere that "Nature is . . . but the perishable body of the imperishable mind of the race" and that Naturalism is to be faulted for "not seeing that Nature is but the inverse of spirit, that natural variety and difference are but the inverse correspondential expression of spiritual unity" (*CLC*, pp. 191-92, 79). A short leap exists from this somewhat idealistic and arguably socialistic celebration of underlying "unity" to Henry Sr.'s claim, in *Society the Redeemed Form of Man*, that the "intrinsic phenomenality of selfhood" confirms that the Divine Natural Humanity is "the sole possible method of creation, . . . the only truth capable of explaining nature and history" (pp. 74-75). In any or all of these outlooks, both before and after 1859, Henry Sr.'s phenomenalism rules out either Naturalism or natural selection as plausible explanations for nature. Similarly, Henry Sr. rejects personal supremacy—itsself a phenomenalist delusion—as a fit model for social organization or interaction.

In *Lectures and Miscellanies*, a related phenomenalism had allowed Henry Sr. to replace the *moralism* of *personal* theology with the more universal and Swedenborgian Divine Natural Humanity. By holding that "the procession of life is always from within to without" (*L&M*, p. 434), and that outward nature does but "typify the invisible things of man's spirit" (*L&M*, p. 61), Henry Sr. arrived at the socialistic conclusion that "Science . . . demonstrat[es] a certain essential

¹⁶ Henry Sr. to William H. Channing, 3 April 1850, p. 7 (Houghton Library: bMS Am 1094.8 [27]). See

Habegger, *Father*, 539, note 296, for clarification about the cataloging of this letter.

accord between nature and spirit, which, if organized in suitable institutions, will operate a complete harmony between the inward and outward spheres of human life, or what is the same thing, between the public and private interests of man." Predictably, that channeling of Swedenborgian correspondences towards a "unity of man with God and his fellow-man" (*L&M*, p. 441) entailed the cessation, when considered from the viewpoint of social science, of "class legislation . . . and privilege" (*L&M*, p. 23). That assault upon hierarchy would evolve from the mind's capacity to envision and effect "communistic" (*L&M*, p. 25) glory, or what Henry Sr. elsewhere calls "the unity of the soul in God, thus the unity of humanity" (*CLC*, p. 79). Once again, therefore, the evolving socialism of Henry Sr.'s published works is compatible with the phenomenistic response to Darwinian evolution in the Houghton manuscript fragment.

Still, whatever Henry Sr.'s early fondness for the idealistic tendency of Berkeley's phenomenism, the prospect of a quite real Divine Humanity evolving through social science—of "our eventual flesh-and-blood resurrection, which is our ultimate social evolution"—helps to explain Henry Sr.'s rejection of "pure or objective idealism" (*SS*, pp. 106, 10): it eradicated distinctions between subject and object, phenomena and noumena, the *me* and the *not me*. As such, pure idealism was subversive of the phenomenistic—that is, of the necessarily vacant and therefore deficient—base of things "natural" and of human identity that facilitates the spiritual involution of God and the ensuing spiritual evolution of "the mind of the race" (*SS*, pp. 181-97; 191 quoted). Although Henry Sr. understood that "Berkeley had no intention to affirm the *sensible* nonentity of matter"—since "matter," for Berkeley, had "a merely superficial or phenomenal existence" (*L&M*, pp. 334-35)—the manuscript fragment steers clear of overtly idealistic rhetoric in offering a phenomenistic rejoinder to *The Origin of Species*. So do Henry Sr.'s later responses to naturalism: "just because space and time, which make up our notion of nature, are thus absolute to our senses, we are led in the infancy of science, or while the senses still dominate the intellect, to confer upon nature a logical absoluteness or reality which in truth is wholly fallacious" (*SS*, pp. 22-23). This phenomenistic critique of "the infancy of science" in *The Secret of Swedenborg* averts the conflation of idealism and phenomenism flaunted by Henry Sr. in *Lectures and Miscellanies* and remains compatible with his attack upon the materialistic "nurslings of science" in the manuscript fragment targeting Darwin.

In reflecting still other concerns of—and perhaps conditioned by the thinking in—the manuscript fragment, an appendix to Henry Sr.'s *The Secret of Swedenborg* responds to the evolutionary science of Huxley and Vogt. In that appendix, Henry Sr. berates "science" for knowing "nothing of what life is in itself, but only in its effects." He similarly attacks men of science for understanding "absolutely nothing of what life is inwardly or consciously, but only of the outward masks or appearances under which it is unconsciously revealed." To illustrate these points, Henry Sr. imagines an antagonist with whom to debate, a "man of science" who "puts his stout tongue in his cheek to deride my old-time beliefs about man's strictly supernatural—i.e. divine or spiritual—origin and destiny." To that imagined response, Henry Sr. flaunts the suggestion that empirical theories of evolution mimic ecclesiastical views of human degeneracy: "no fungus so malignant, no ape so unclean, as not to furnish an apt type of our *degenerate* natural possibilities" (*SS*, pp. 227). At issue in Darwinian thought, as Henry Sr. elsewhere makes clear, was "the spiritual dignity of human nature" (*SRFM*, p. 224).

Insofar as Henry Sr. believed that a truly dignified outlook on human potential would emerge from the evolution of the human mind towards the spiritual socialism entailed in a Divine Humanity, he would likely—and with great irony—have classed Darwin among those bemired in “the dogma of a physical creation” (SS, pp. 23-24). After all, Henry Sr. had already faulted orthodoxy for its “naturalistic method” of regarding “creation as a physical act of God, and consequently mak[ing] all intercourse of Creator and creature physical instead of spiritual, external instead of internal” (NE, 249). In his much later treatment of Darwinism, however, Henry Sr. would not remain as confrontational in tone as he had been in the manuscript fragment. Instead, he came to appropriate Darwinian language to his own ends, one of those ends being to subvert dogmatic outlooks on creation:

The order of nature going from mineral to vegetable, vegetable to animal, and animal to man, is and will always remain perfectly reputable, because it is the very order of human thought while in . . . the innocency of ignorance—and accepts without scruple . . . the *traditional* dogma of creation. (SC, p. 276)

Darwin, by implication, was behind—rather than in advance of—the times.

Be the process Divine or arbitrary, spanning six days or 4.5 billion years, such arguments about creation were of little matter to a social scientist schooled in Swedenborg’s rejection of “any doctrine of nature which proceeds upon the assumption of her finality, or does not construe her as a mere constitutional means to a superior creative end—as a mere outward echo . . . of the *true creative activity* in the inward realms of *being*” (SS, p. 24; emphasis added). Henry Sr. therefore refers pejoratively to biblical creation in its “fossil sense” (SS, p. 143)—that is in its materialistic sense of creation *ex nihil*—and, by extension, to so-called scientific evidence of naturalistic evolution. He regards the materialistic subserviency of both as conjoined misapprehensions of the actually provisional—because merely phenomenalistic—natural forms that are prerequisite for the influx of divine, actual Being. Being, alone, *involves* spiritual—that is, genuine—evolution. Thus, Henry Sr. deemed *theological creation* and *fossil sense* as kindred forms of speculation which had been superseded by the fact of a spiritual evolution that had exhausted its use for all such “lower forms” (SS, p. 139). Here is an innovative approach to the teleological puzzle of extinction.

The evolution of Henry Sr.’s sense of the impertinence of Darwinism may account for the difference in tone between the intensity of the manuscript fragment and the casualness with which Henry Sr. later relegates “fossil or palaeontological significance” to the “mere intellectual commonplace” (SC, p. 378). Offhand, as well, in its implied disparagement of Darwinism, is Henry Sr.’s reference to the “phenomenally extinct” (SS, p. 52) nature of finite—as opposed to spiritual—personality. Then there is Henry Sr.’s cavalier definition of “*phenomena*” as “the mutations to which things are subject inwardly and outwardly.” That co-opting of New Science rhetoric occurs in a passage that seems to challenge the merely natural evolution of species by discounting those “purely phenomenal modifications to which [the] forms of [finite existence] are incidentally and accidentally exposed” (SSh, p. 310). Since Henry Sr. elsewhere refers interchangeably to nature’s “forms or species” (SRFM, p. 228; cf. SS, p. 145; “SH,” p. 269), he appears eager to render the New Science moot by positing natural evolution as a provisional precursor of the divine communication that ultimately vitalizes, or imparts true Being, to the phenomenalistic appearance of man:

no hypothesis of evolution will ever be competent to furnish a pedigree of existence, unless it start from a previous philosophy of involution. . . . Thus, if, as many self-constituted partisans of science are prone to believe, monkey *evolves* man, it can only be by virtue of man first *involving* monkey. (*SRFM*, p. 222)

Man, by extension, is simply one more phenomenalist link in that peculiar chain of non-being. Whatever man's naturalistic evolution, he is still an apparitional form in need of genuine—that is, of spiritual—creation.

Although by 1879 Henry Sr. would describe as “irreproachable” Darwin's comparative “method” of observing the underlying unity among the appearances of nature, Henry Sr. would nonetheless dismiss as “a downright witches' sabbath of science” any claims from such observations about “the *origination* of species,” or about “the creation of existence,” or about making human “*existence* a product of evolution from lower forms” (emphasis added). Given the phenomenism of all natural “forms,” anybody drawing conclusions about creation from such illusions is simply “*not* . . . reason[ing] scientifically” (*SRFM*, pp. 220–27). Still again, therefore, Henry Sr.'s reformulation of the tie between phenomenism and evolution coincides with the concerns of the manuscript fragment, the epistemology of which foreshadows Henry Sr.'s views about spiritual creation.

That process of creation implies the “evolution of the creature's destiny” toward “consciousness of community with his kind.” Thus, in a passage with an even bolder involution of Henry Sr.'s cosmology into the scientific outlook of Darwin, Henry Sr. says that spiritual expansion calls forth

the successive extrication of the true Divine creature from this carnal confinement or embodiment, through all the stages of mineral existence or body, vegetable growth and animal motion, up to the full evolution of the human form in which creation culminates and closes. (*SSH*, p. 464)

Henry Sr. here anticipates his commandeering of Darwinism in the posthumously published *Spiritual Creation*. Having explained the phenomenalist base of “nature”—that is to say its essential void awaiting an influx of socialistic divine Being—Henry Sr. blithely extends “all praise . . . to Mr. Darwin, Mr. Huxley, and other scientifically qualified persons, for telling us that they discover no trace of creative power in nature” (*SC*, p. 278). Thereafter, Henry Sr. co-opts the rhetoric of Darwinians and theologians alike by linking the phenomenism of humanity's “mineral, vegetable, and animal *ancestry*” to his own “faith” in a divine “incarnation” or involution. Through spiritual creation, that “incarnation” redeems man from delusory and isolationist phenomena by “lifting him into conscious unity and amity with all divine perfection”—that is, with “his race's welfare” (*SC*, p. 394; emphasis added). The implication is that science—and ecclesiasticism, for that matter—occupies “the humble but honorable office of ministering to a new intellectual faith and a new spiritual life in man” (*SRFM*, p. 230).

That spiritual life intimates an important distinction between philosophy and science foreshadowed by the manuscript fragment's claim that “the origin of species” is “a purely scientific controversy without any direct philosophic issues.” Evident here is the assumption, developed in *Substance and Shadow*, that philosophy, by demanding the “absolute ground” of “existence,” transcends the effort of science to infer “the relative”; philosophy becomes “a demonstration of the Infinite in the finite, of the Absolute in the relative.” Unlike naturalism,

which fails to carry “the finite and relative up to their highest term of evolution in moral existence” (pp. 318–19), philosophy maps the social direction and evolution of the Divine Humanity.

That line of thinking eventually led Henry Sr. to challenge the protoplasmic speculations of Huxley: “Philosophy is perfectly indifferent to what naturally *constitutes* existence or gives it outward body, but reserves all her interest for what spiritually *creates* it, or gives it inward soul.” Henry Sr. deems that subserviency of evolutionary science to philosophy vital, lest man wallow in “the abject slime out of which his body germinates” rather than realize the far preferable and spiritual “evolution of a free society, fellowship, or equality of all men with each and each with all on earth and in heaven—as the veritable apotheosis of our nature” (*SRFM*, pp. 241–42, 244, 146). To the extent that Henry Sr. here and elsewhere appropriates the idea of “evolution” to posit socialism as both the embodiment and deification of human nature, his political “science” continues to resonate with the “philosophical” premise of his phenomenalist critique of Darwin in the manuscript fragment.

Beyond echoing the quarrel with Darwin in the manuscript fragment, this phenomenalist outlook assumes sociological importance through the suggestion that a materialistic view of creation impedes the advent of the socialist state, that “plenary social form” comprising “the end of God’s spiritual creation in human nature” (*SRFM*, p. 449). In a related vein, and in an appendix to *Substance and Shadow* devoted to “men of science” and featuring another communal use of the term “evolution,” Henry Sr. claims that “the mind has . . . a public evolution as well as a private one,” and that “this common or public form must be wrought out to its full measure of expansion, before the individual or private form can perfectly realize itself, or becomes adequately empowered for its own spiritual functions” (pp. 525–26).

A nascent expression of that socialistic sentiment may exist in the manuscript fragment’s phenomenalist critique of “men of science” for being “hopelessly backward as to philosophic tendencies” and for not distinguishing “science” from “sense” when they fail to understand that science is a “research exclusively of the substantial identity which underlies all existence, and which is only masked by its formal diversity.” *Substance and Shadow* and *Spiritual Creation* significantly develop the sociological connotations of that scientific primitivism. Whereas men of science ignore the phenomenism of diverse natural forms, “Philosophy demands what unitary life it is that thus vivifies the varied life of nature” (*SSH*, p. 318). “Vivifies” implies true creation or Being; “unitary life” intimates an underlying identity evolving towards a “unitary or race-consciousness” that is “one and universal,—that is *social*” in the achievement of “a perfect fellowship or society of each man . . . with all other men” (*SC*, pp. 389, 392). That process of associating “God’s perfection” with the “our race-evolution” (*SC*, p. 383) may well comprise the meaning of history and social “science” as Henry Sr. developed those concepts within categories implied by the manuscript fragment, but the validity of mental generalizations about evolution and utopianism would not go unchallenged in the post-Darwinian era.

Consider, for instance, the 1893 Romanes Lecture of Thomas Henry Huxley on “Evolution and Ethics.” He stated that “immoral sentiments have no less been evolved” than “moral sentiments,” and he argued that “the theory of evolution encourages no millennial anticipations.” Consistent with this disavowal of utopian

applications of Darwinism is Julian Huxley's 1947 critique of the ostensibly evolutionary nature of Marxism. Beyond regarding Marx's "naturalistic analysis" as "too restricted, in limiting the mechanism of social evolution to a class struggle, and one based only on economics," Julian objected to pretensions about a corresponding "state" of mind: "Engels' inclusion of mind as one of his emergent evolutionary levels is logically inadmissible. Mind is a subjective concept, and cannot take its place in a series of objective stages." Additionally, and in the context of Nazi insistence upon the supremacy of the State, Julian maintained in 1943—as had William James, over sixty years earlier—that "the human individual is not merely inherently higher than the State, but the rightly-developed individual is . . . the highest product of evolution, even though he needs the proper organization of society to achieve his welfare and realize his development."¹⁷

These critiques of militant utopianism and its quasi-idealistic underpinning in "evolutionary ethics" are pertinent to Henry Sr.'s speculations about the spiritual evolution of socialism. That speculation, as we have seen, compasses relations in Henry Sr.'s manuscript fragment and published writings among such concepts as Swedenborgian harmony, Berkeleyian idealism, phenomenism, creationism, and Darwinism—all of which Henry Sr. channelled into a vision of socialism based upon "science," by which he meant the "scientific evolution of the human mind" into "the Divinely-perfect body of the Divinely-perfect mind of the race" (*CLC*, pp. 152–53; cf. p. 134). For Henry Sr., therefore, "the race alone is *real* man, and . . . sets the tune . . . for us paltry, personal, or phenomenal men to march to" (*SC*, p. 362). Yet the *New Science* demanded, as Dewey remarked, that "*a priori*" formulations of the universe and society be subjected to assessment and "responsibility" by virtue of the "way in which the ideas . . . work out in practice."¹⁸ With respect to the arguable tendencies of the outlook of Henry Sr., we can only guess whether he might eventually have acknowledged—as did Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, the twentieth-century theologian whose views Henry Sr. sometimes foreshadows—the "perversion" of evolution implied by the regressive "ant-hill" mentality of Communism and National Socialism.¹⁹

¹⁷ T. H. Huxley, "Evolution and Ethics" (1893); Julian Huxley, "Introduction" (1947); "Evolutionary Ethics" (1943), in *Touchstone for Ethics*, 90, 93, 27, 140. For William James's 1880 defense of the place of "the individual" in "social evolution," see John Spencer Clark, *The Life and Letters of John Fiske*, 2 vols. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1917), 2:193. Cf. Richards's observations, *Darwin*, 433, 435, about "the evolutionary argument for the independence of mind" and William's "discovery of the Darwinian argument for mental autonomy."

¹⁸ Dewey, *The Influence of Darwin on Philosophy and Other Essays in Contemporary Thought* (1910; rpt. New York: Henry Holt, 1951), 17–18.

¹⁹ Teilhard, *The Phenomenon of Man*, ed. Julian Huxley, trans. Bernard Wall (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1959), 256–57. Henry Sr. occasionally anticipates the spiritualized encounter with Darwin of Teilhard, who posits "*the social phenomenon*" as the "*culmination and not the attenuation of the biological phenomenon*" (p. 222). Henry Sr.'s belief in the spiritual evolution of a Divine

Natural Humanity foreshadows Teilhard's notions of a "harmonised collectivity of consciousness" (p. 251) and a "Future-Universal" at an "Omega Point" (p. 260). The "involution" (pp. 73, 258, 306) that figures in Teilhard's conception of a "noosphere" and of a unifying Love transfigured into Energy (p. 264) bears comparison to Henry Sr.'s formulation of related ideas in Swedenborgian terms. I wish to thank L. Robert Stevens for suggesting Teilhard's pertinence for my concerns, and James Baird, James Linebarger, and Stan Goldman, whose close readings of this study figured in its evolution. Thanks are also due Kenneth E. Carpenter, for his splendid editorial suggestions; Ms. Ellen Lee, for her assistance in transcribing the Houghton manuscript fragment; and, for their helpfulness to visiting scholars, Ms. Melanie Wisner, Houghton Reading Room; Ms. Leslie Morris, Curator of Manuscripts, Houghton Library; Ms. Jean Hilliard, Librarian, Swedenborg School of Religion; and Dr. Mary Kay Klein, Director, Swedenborg School of Religion.