

### Organic Unity of Man

"The action itself gives quality to truths..."<sup>80</sup> Man is a connected whole, not a series of unrelated mental and physical planes. The body and spirit are inextricably interwoven, and so also are the freedom of the spirit and the freedom of the body. Because the will is free, the body also enjoys freedom.

Consider also, whatever your circumstances may be, whether without free will you can think at all; and whether in your conversation, in your prayers to God, in preaching and even in listening, free will does not operate at every point. Indeed, without free will even in the most minute particulars, you would no more breathe than a statue....<sup>81</sup> It is not denied that a man has free will in natural things; but he enjoys this as a consequence of his free will in spiritual things.<sup>82</sup>

"The Lord keeps man in freedom of thought, and so far as external bonds, such as fear of the law and of life, and fear of the loss of reputation, honor and gain do not prevent, He keeps man in freedom of action."<sup>83</sup> "All that is called *freedom* which belongs to the will, and thus which belongs to love. On this ground it is that freedom manifests itself through the delight of willing and thinking, and hence that of doing and speaking..."<sup>84</sup>

Other passages similarly stress the unity of freedom of spirit and body.

Free will in spiritual things, being the source of all this freedom, is thus imparted to all forms of free will in natural things; and by means of these the love ruling in the highest regions assumes whatever is conducive to its purposes. The communication between spiritual and natural freedom is like the channel between the fountain and the waters that are fed

\*The first part appeared in *New Philosophy*, 86: 1:4-21.

<sup>80</sup> AC 4984

<sup>81</sup> TCR 480

<sup>82</sup> TCR 481; see DLW 264

<sup>83</sup> AC 9587

<sup>84</sup> AC 9585; see also DLW 266

from it, and like that between the prolific principle in the seed and every single part of the tree, particularly the fruit, in which it is reproduced.<sup>85</sup>

We should note especially the organic unity between the fountain and stream, and between the seed and the tree: without a tree, the seed (analogous to freedom in spiritual things) dies useless.

Thus there is an organic unity of man, and of freedom in spiritual and natural things. Will and action are closely related.

Free will resides in a man's soul in the fullest perfection; and thence, as the spring water into the fountain, it flows into the two parts of his mind, the will and the understanding, and through these into the bodily senses, and into speech and action. For there are in every man three degrees of life, the soul, the mind, and the sensual body; and whatever is in a higher degree is in a state of perfection above that which is in a lower degree. This freedom is the means by which, in which and with which the Lord is present with man, unceasingly urging to be received.<sup>86</sup>

Freedom is in its perfection in the interiors of man, but it is also present in his lower degrees, though in a less perfect state. Anyone can observe that he is more free in his thoughts and affections than in his words and actions. Again, we read in *True Christian Religion* 489: "What is free will but man's power to will and to act, to think and to speak to all appearances as from himself?" Note the close tie between will and action, and between thinking and speaking.

There is a considerable body of doctrine to explain the connection of will and action, or of spirit and body, and a study of this scope can do no more than survey the most cogent teachings. The doctrines of spiritual and natural substance, discrete degrees, influx and correspondences are all relevant, as is the doctrine of instrumental causes and ultimates. In many passages the Writings stress that for will to be will, it must be ultimated in action. "The mind, in the very act of operating, acts together with and at the same time as the body."<sup>87</sup> The soul and body act as one in operation.<sup>88</sup>

A particularly important sequence is *Divine Love and Wisdom* 215-220, from which I quote only the following:

<sup>85</sup> TCR 494; see also 482

<sup>86</sup> TCR 498

<sup>87</sup> ISB 1:3

<sup>88</sup> ISB 4

It is according to angelic wisdom that unless the will and understanding, that is, affection and thought, as well as charity and faith, clothe and wrap themselves in works or deeds, whenever possible, they are only like something airy which passes away, or like phantoms in air which perish; and that *they first become permanent in man and a part of his life, when he practices and does them.* The reason is that the ultimate is the complex, containment and base of things prior.<sup>89</sup>

Elsewhere we read:

*To love the Lord* means to do uses from Him and for His sake....Loving these is doing them, for what a man loves he does. No one can love the Lord in any other way....Love, unless it becomes deed, ceases to be love, since deed is the bringing about of its purpose, and is that in which it has its existence....A man's mind, in each separate part of it, extends into all things of his body; it is into all things of the body that its range of activity is, for it is the very form of life. Unless the mind had that field, there would not be a mind, not a man. It is in consequence of the above that the choice and good pleasure of a man's will instantly bring forth and determine actions....<sup>90</sup>

Many passages describe how affection and thought flow into action and speech. "By creation there are gestures corresponding to every affection, and a man falls into them spontaneously when he comes into the affection, provided he has not learned to counterfeit affections that are foreign to him...."<sup>91</sup> The body is nothing but obedience to the mind;<sup>92</sup> and when man "wills to do this or that, in this manner or that, and is thinking of it, the organs then move in concurrence, thus in accordance with the intention of the function or use...."<sup>93</sup>

The mind actuates the body in externals, and generally in response to its every suggestion. It moves the eye to see, the

<sup>89</sup> DLW 216; emphasis added

<sup>90</sup> D. Love XIII

<sup>91</sup> AE 1206; see 77; HH 212; CL 310; DLW 259, 268, 277-281, 316, 330, 343e; AC 1388:2, 1999, 2153, 2988:2, 3807, 3993, 4215, 4247:2,3, 5323, 5337:2, 6261, 7596; TCR 593; etc.; many examples are given of natural actions coming forth from affections of the mind. See also *Rational Psychology* 360-363, 377

<sup>92</sup> DLW 387; HH 60

<sup>93</sup> AC 4223

ears to hear, the mouth and tongue to speak, the hands to act, the feet to walk, the generative organs to propagate. The mind moves not only the externals to these actions but also the internals throughout the whole series, the last from the inmost and the inmost from the last. Thus while it is moving the mouth to speak, it at the same time moves the lungs, the larynx, the glottis, the tongue, the lips, each separately to its own function, and even the face to present a suitable expression.<sup>94</sup>

Would any of this be possible if actions were not free?

The principle which governs the body's acting from will and understanding is the law of correspondences.<sup>95</sup> In other words, not any gesture or action will clothe a particular affection or thought, for the ultimates of the body correspond to the will and understanding. "Those things which from the thoughts are determined into speech, and those which from the will are determined into acts in the body, flow in an orderly way [*ordinate*] into act by general influx, according to correspondences with the Grand Man..."<sup>96</sup>

Swedenborg wondered why particular spirits did not govern speech and action as well as thought and will. "But I was instructed that speech follows from thought, and action from will, and that this flows from order, thus through general influx..."<sup>97</sup> "When thought is determined into speech, and voluntary things into action, the determination and transition into the body are according to order, and are not ruled by any spirits in particular..."<sup>98</sup> If spirits could rule man's speech and action, they would possess his body.<sup>99</sup> In other words, the Lord carefully governs spirits so that affection and thought will not be prevented from being ultimated in word and deed. This does not mean the body is as free as the spirit, because there are some restraints upon speech and action. But clearly man has been created so that the body can ultimate what the spirit wills and thinks.

Why is this? The fundamental reason man is at least somewhat free in action as well as on the plane of the spirit is that the spiritual

<sup>94</sup> DP 181; see also 180

<sup>95</sup> AC 2153, 2988, 3807, 4215, 5323, 6261, 7596; DLW 374ff., 406; AE 1206; etc.

<sup>96</sup> AC 5862

<sup>97</sup> AC 6211

<sup>98</sup> AC 5990

<sup>99</sup> AC 5990; see also HH 603:8; AC 6192; ISB 2:2, 4:3, 12, 17; etc.

cannot be without the natural for its existence or standing forth. It is the plane of nature that provides a necessary ultimate basis for the spiritual. Again, a full presentation of this doctrine would lengthen this study well beyond its usefulness, but a few important passages must be cited.

The spiritual world cannot stand forth or subsist without the natural world.<sup>100</sup> Can the spiritual nevertheless *be* without the natural, even if it cannot *stand forth* alone? No, because *esse* and *existere* cannot be separated. "*Esse* is not *esse* unless it *stands forth*, because prior to this it is not in a form, it has no quality, and that which has no quality is not anything."<sup>101</sup> "*Esse* is nothing unless it stands forth; and it becomes something by standing forth."<sup>102</sup> Where there is a first, there must be a last, or ultimate.<sup>103</sup> "Divine order never subsists in the middle, and there forms something without an ultimate, for it is not in its fullness and perfection; but it proceeds to the ultimate; and when it is in its ultimate, then it forms, and by means collected there it renews itself and produces itself further...."<sup>104</sup>

We may ask why this is so. Is not the spiritual real and substantial? It is, but in a different way from natural substance. Unlike natural things, spiritual things are not fixed and static; in fact their lack of fixity constitutes the difference between the spiritual and natural universes.<sup>105</sup> Spiritual things of themselves are not permanent or constant.<sup>106</sup> Of themselves spiritual things are continually shifting and changing. This is why no procreations of men are possible except in the ultimates of nature,<sup>107</sup> and why man could not survive without a limbus or border drawn from the finest things of nature.<sup>108</sup> Were he separated from this ultimate, "his spiritual things, which belong to the thoughts and affections of his spirit, would flow away, like things unfounded...."<sup>109</sup>

<sup>100</sup> LJ 9; Coronis 19; AE 1207:4

<sup>101</sup> DLW 15; see 14

<sup>102</sup> D. Love XIXe

<sup>103</sup> AE 1207:3

<sup>104</sup> HH 315; see also DLW 167-172, 209-230, 277-281; D. Wis. VIII, 2; LJ 9, 20; AC 6077, 10634:2; AE 1206:3, 1207, 1210; SD 5709; D. Love XI:2; Coronis 19; and a number of other passages about the ultimate degree as the complex, containant and basis of prior discrete degrees, and as that in which the prior degrees are in their fullness and power.

<sup>105</sup> DLW 321e; see AC 7381:3

<sup>106</sup> See DLW 70; TCR 78:4; AE 628, 1219; D. Wis. VIII,3

<sup>107</sup> TCR 78:4; D. Wis. VIII, 2,3; XII, 5:3; LJ 9

<sup>108</sup> TCR 14, 103; DLW 388; DP 220:2,3; D. Wis. VIII, 3,4

<sup>109</sup> LJ 9

The impermanence of spiritual things may be seen by anyone from reflection upon his own shifting affections and thoughts; these become permanent in him according as he ultimates them. All spiritual things—love and wisdom, will and understanding, affection and thought—become permanent by being clothed in natural ultimates, and until then they are perpetually changing their state. The road to hell is paved not with actual good intentions, but with temporary feelings of good will that are lost in the shuffle because they are not ultimated.

Hence we have the doctrine of ultimates: the Lord's operation in man and creation is not from firsts through mediates into ultimates, "but from firsts through ultimates and thus into mediates."<sup>110</sup> "Where there is a first there must always be an ultimate, and... every thing intermediate from the first exists together in the ultimate..."<sup>111</sup>

A good example of the importance of ultimates is given in the treatment of national genius found in *True Christian Religion* 813-815, where it is shown that the degree of spiritual enlightenment a nation enjoys is affected by the degree of civil freedom it has.<sup>112</sup>

The doctrine of instrumental causes reinforces the point.

Both an active and a *passive* are necessary to every operation, and...nothing can be produced from an *active* alone, and nothing from a *passive* alone. It is similar with what is spiritual and what is natural; what is spiritual, as a living force, being active, and what is natural, as a dead force, being passive...In every effect which is produced there are both a principal and an instrumental cause, and...these two, when anything is done, appear as one, although they are distinctly two; wherefore it is one of the laws of wisdom that the principal and the instrumental cause make together one cause: so also do what is spiritual and what is natural.<sup>113</sup>

<sup>110</sup> AE 1086:5; see 41, 113, 328:5, 405:24, 475:17, 654:19, 666:4, 726:7, 806:3, 1087:3, 1207:4, 1226:4; HH 112; DLW 167, 168, 170, 171, 218, 298, 307, 314; ISB 12, 17; SD 4605, 4611; Canons, God, VII, 2, 3, 5; D. Wis. VIII, 2; D. Love VIII, DP 181

<sup>111</sup> AE 1207:4; see DLW 154, 167-169, 184, 209

<sup>112</sup> See *New Church Life*, Vol. LXXXVIII, pp. 335-344, July, 1968, for a fuller discussion of the relation between the civil and spiritual order

<sup>113</sup> ISB 11; see 10:2, 12:4, 14:4; DLW 4, 88e, 153, 163,164,166, 263, 315; AE 1196-1199, 1215:3, 1218; D. Wis. XIII, 5:3; Coronis 17:2, 19; TCR 33, 472, 473, 607:2, 154; AC 4206, 5131, 5173, 5323, 5828:3; CL 235:2; HH 567

Thus "the varied can stand forth only in what is constant, fixed and certain."<sup>114</sup> Without a fixed foundation angels would disappear, just as visible spiritual things disappear when the angelic affections to which they correspond are changed.<sup>115</sup> It is the use of the natural to provide fixation for what is alive—to give the spiritual a foundation of constancy<sup>7</sup> so that it may stand forth and subsist. Nature was created in order that "in ultimates all things may be fixed, settled and constant, and that thence there may stand forth things which are permanent and durable: thus and no otherwise is creation founded."<sup>116</sup>

The means of creation, then, are discrete degrees which in themselves are separated from each other. But creation, and man, do not consist of isolated planes of reality which do not communicate with each other. (This would be so if man were free only in his interior planes and not in his conscious life and actions.) Discrete degrees communicate with each other through influx and correspondences, and in this way there is an overall connection of everything created, from firsts to ultimates.<sup>117</sup> It is by means of discrete degrees in all things that the created universe is a connected and coherent whole.<sup>118</sup> Thus all things of mans spirit and body are held in "continuous connection."<sup>119</sup> If everything from firsts to lasts were not so held in continuous connection, they would cease to be; "what is unconnected is dissipated as nothing."<sup>120</sup> All planes of creation are connected and all planes of man are connected. Life is

<sup>114</sup> DP 190

<sup>115</sup> D. Wis. VIII, 3

<sup>116</sup> DLW 165; see also 7, 70, 160, 304, 315, 321e, 322, 340, 344, 346; D. Wis. 11,3; VII, 5; VIII, 3; XII, 5:3, AC 4939, 7381:3; AE 538, 628, 1206:2, 1207:2, 1212:3,1219, 1226:2; HH 102; TCR 78:4; compare also the teaching that the end of all things is in the spiritual sun, the causes of all things are in the spiritual world, and the effects of all things are in the natural world; DLW 134e, 154, 295e; HH 89, 567; AC 2991, 2993, 4524, 7384, 8211:2, 8812e; AE 726:4, 1197:3, 1204; CL 328; ISB 11; Canons, God, IV, 7

<sup>117</sup> DLW 226

<sup>118</sup> ISB 5; DLW 154, 226, 227; Canons, God, VII

<sup>119</sup> AC 7270:3; HH 303; see AC 5116:3; DLW 172; HH 9; etc.

<sup>120</sup> AC 4525; see 5116, 5377, 8054:2; DLW 305; HH 37 and references, 303.

On the continuous connection from the First of all things created, see also *Angelic Idea*; D. Wis. XII, 5; AC 3627, 3628, 4939. Compare also the doctrine that all subsistence (or being a substance) is a perpetual standing forth. AC 3483, 3648, 4044, 4322, 4523:3, 4524, 5084:3, 6040, 6056, 6482, 9502, 10076:5, etc.

solely from the spiritual, not from the natural, but neither the spiritual nor the natural can survive without connection to the other.

This is the reason that the actions of the body are so important, and that the Lord could not give man a freedom of the spirit without granting him also a freedom of bodily action. Stated simply, man does not choose good and evil abstractly from day-to-day life. He chooses good or evil in the decisions he makes daily in meeting the actual challenges and problems that confront him. It matters *spiritually* what he does in his physical actions right here, now. Although good external actions do not necessarily mean he has made good spiritual choices, a spiritual choice, before it really is a spiritual choice, must be ultimated in some kind of corresponding action. Hence the necessity of some freedom of action. Even the formation of an intention, I believe, must involve some physical ultimatum, however small; and of course if an intention is not acted upon when there is opportunity, it is not a true intention, but a passing affection and thought.<sup>121</sup> "To will is to love doing."<sup>122</sup> "For unless a man does that which he wills there is within him the failure to will which eventually becomes lack of will."<sup>123</sup> If spiritual choices do not need to be ultimated in some degree of natural freedom, why do we bother?

There is even the remarkable statement, "*Act precedes, man's willing follows*; for that which a man does from the understanding, he *at last* does from the will, and *finally* puts it on as a habit; and it is *then* insinuated in his rational or internal man. And when it has been insinuated in this, the man no longer does good from truth, but from good...."<sup>124</sup> Action is thus necessary for truth to become good in man. The teaching that "the action itself gives quality to truths"<sup>125</sup> (AC 4984) is not a passing comment, but essential for our understanding of the very meaning and purpose of our human existence.

### **Is Man's Freedom Contingent on Others?**

An important question arises if man is free in speech and action as well as in mind: how much real effect can he have upon other

<sup>121</sup> See DP 78:2, 80, 108

<sup>122</sup> HH 16

<sup>123</sup> DP 151; see TCR 119:2

<sup>124</sup> AC 4353e; emphasis added

<sup>125</sup> AC 4984

people? Can he affect their spiritual state in any lasting way? Or does Providence so regulate the interiors of all men that no one's decisions will have any permanent spiritual effects on others? Again, we cannot have it both ways, since if through our free choices we can have a good effect on another, such that his spiritual life is permanently helped in some way it would not otherwise be helped, then it follows that we can also have bad effects on others—if in no other way, then by *not* having a possible good effect on him. On the other hand, if Providence so carefully regulates man's states that nothing we choose to say or do can be harmful to another in any lasting way, then it follows that however much the Lord may use us for good, our own free efforts will have no real effects on another and his eternal spiritual life will be the same whatever we do. We may instinctively rebel at this dilemma, desiring both providential protection of man from any harm, and also the ability to have effects for eternal good upon our neighbor.

In an earlier part of the study (WHAT DO THE WRITINGS SAY?) several examples from the Writings were presented which indicate that man can have permanent spiritual effects on others by his freely chosen actions. To take a few specific instances, parents can "extinguish in the earliest age all the mutual love and all the innocence that little children have from the Lord, and initiate them into hatred and revenge. Consequently by their own endeavors they shut their children out of heaven..."<sup>126</sup> At least so the angels told Swedenborg. If someone had said, "But the Lord will protect them; He would not permit bad parents to bring any lasting harm to their children", would the angels have felt differently? Perhaps, yet the passage suggests otherwise, speaking not of providential prevention of any harm being done, but of their horror at what some parents did. "Let parents therefore who wish well to their children beware of such things." The angels did not say parents can grant or withhold salvation, but they clearly thought that parents can have major spiritual effects on their children.<sup>127</sup>

A similar conclusion emerges from the teachings on defloration.<sup>128</sup> After the door of conjugal love has been broken through, if she does not repent "a woman deflowered by such men loses her modesty and becomes a harlot, and *of this that robber also is the cause.*"<sup>129</sup> This hardly exonerates the woman from responsibility, but

<sup>126</sup> HH 344

<sup>127</sup> See EU 172 for another instance

<sup>128</sup> CL 460, 502-504

<sup>129</sup> CL 504:2; see 460:2

it seems clear that the man is partly a cause of the spiritual state into which such a woman comes. (This is a major theme of Leo Tolstoy's novel, *Resurrection*. *Arcana Coelestia* 1113 presents a similar example.)

Again, nuns, priests and monks are released after death from their vows of celibacy, but some of these who are good choose to remain celibate and live at the sides of heaven.<sup>130</sup> The doctrine of celibacy has had eternal effects upon their spiritual life. It is clear that their own free response to that doctrine determines their eternal homes, but have not the previous decisions of countless people who developed the dogma of celibacy in the first place had a real, permanent influence on the spiritual lives of such celibates? Had they not lived in a society that highly valued celibacy, would they now be at the sides of heaven? The case for man's having *some* spiritual effect upon others seems strong.

Finally, the slaughter of the Shechemites very clearly had spiritual effects upon the Shechemites—good effects in this case.<sup>131</sup> Protection from profanation was one of the reasons the Lord permitted the Shechemites to be destroyed. But the slaughter was not the work of the Lord; it was the work of the sons of Israel, as the Writings make very plain.<sup>132</sup> Here again we see men's free decisions—the decision to slaughter the Shechemites and many past decisions which brought about the evil situation in the first place—seem to be able to have some eternal consequences for other people.

Now man's eternal home results from the man's own free decisions. No influence we can have on another can send him permanently to any society of heaven or hell where he does not choose to be. In that sense a man's freedom is not contingent upon anyone else's free decisions. Yet from these and other examples it appears that the decisions of one man may inhibit or limit the freedom of others to some extent.

Probably the fullest discussion of this question is in *Divine Providence* 129-153. Here it is shown that states of mind do occur in which free will is not entirely destroyed, but neither is a man free to be reformed and regenerated. Some of these states come from such things as sickness, insanity, and misfortune. Others come from self-justification and various fears or evil within the man himself. But some such states arise from the decisions of other men—such as compulsion to worship. Human choice is the source of some of the non-free states in which others cannot be reformed.

<sup>130</sup> CL 54, 155

<sup>131</sup> AC 4493

<sup>132</sup> AC 4493

Now with all such states the internal remains free and uncompelled.<sup>133</sup> "Fear can in no wise invade the internal of thought, this being always in freedom because it is his life's love...<sup>134</sup> "No one can be compelled to believe contrary to what he thinks in his heart to be true."<sup>135</sup> Hence we have the frequent teaching that man's spiritual freedom is never violated.<sup>136</sup>

But the doctrine does not rest here. Although compulsion cannot invade the internal of man, this does not mean that man can never impede another's free choice in spiritual things. The *internal* cannot be forced to change, but if the *external* is not free, the man is not free to be reformed. The passage just quoted (teaching that fear can in no way invade the internal of thought) continues that fear "can invade the external of thought, and when it does this the internal of thought is closed; and when this is closed man can no longer act from freedom according to his reason, and therefore cannot be reformed."<sup>137</sup> The body may be compelled, indeed to some extent it should be.<sup>138</sup> "But the external of his spirit, which consists in thinking and willing, must not be compelled, for *thus perishes his internal freedom by which he is reformed.*"<sup>139</sup> "Free will really belongs to the internal man; and when this is closed up, the man becomes external and natural; and such a man does not see any spiritual truth."<sup>140</sup>

In other words, the internal of man always remains free in that it is not changed by fear or compulsion, but neither can it change itself without flowing into the external. The internal will and thought cannot function in isolation on their own plane, apart from the external will and thought and to some extent the body. Everything of the understanding and of the will must be formed by means of the external before it is formed by means of the internal.<sup>141</sup>

The state of man's thought is such that from the internal of his thought he sees a thing in the external of his thought as in a kind of mirror....When he sees the thing, as in mirror, he can also turn it this way and that, and shape it until it appears to

<sup>133</sup> DP 136

<sup>134</sup> DP 139

<sup>135</sup> AC 10798

<sup>136</sup> AE 1155:5; DP 96, 97; AC 2876; etc.

<sup>137</sup> DP 139

<sup>138</sup> DP 129:2, 136:2; AE 1155:3; to this subject we will return.

<sup>139</sup> AE 1155:3; emphasis added

<sup>140</sup> Inv. 6

<sup>141</sup> DP 136:7

him to be a thing of beauty. If this is a truth it may be compared to a maiden or a youth, beautiful and living. If, however, the man cannot turn it this way and that and shape it, but can only believe it from the persuasion induced by a miracle, it may be compared, if it is then a truth, to a maiden or a youth carved from stone or wood, in which there is no life. It may also be compared to an object that is constantly before the sight and, being alone seen, hides from view everything that is on either side of it and behind it. Again, it may be compared to a continual sound in the ear that takes away the perception of harmony arising from many sounds. Such blindness and deafness are induced on the human mind by miracles. *It is the same with everything that is confirmed which is not seen with some degree of rationality before being confirmed.*<sup>142</sup>

The immediate reference in this passage is to persuasive faith induced by miracles, but the last sentence and the argument throughout the passage make clear that anything that compels the external of thought deprives man of liberty and rationality by preventing the Lord from flowing in "through the internal into the external of thought."<sup>143</sup>

Thus we are taught that the internal, even though its own freedom is inviolate,

is so averse to compulsion by the external that it turns itself away. This is because the internal wishes to be in freedom, and loves freedom, for freedom belongs to the love or life of man....Therefore when freedom feels itself being compelled *it withdraws as it were within itself and turns itself away*, and regards compulsion as an enemy; for the love that constitutes the life of man is irritated and causes the man to think that in this matter he is not master of himself, and consequently that his life is not his own....From this it is clear that it is harmful to compel men to Divine worship by threats and punishments.<sup>144</sup>

Compulsion cannot change the internal, but it limits and restricts it, and by boxing it into itself (*closing it, Divine Providence 139:2*), prevents the man as a whole from freely choosing to be reformed. The man himself then feels he is not his own master because the

<sup>142</sup> DP 130:2; emphasis added; see 150-153, 168, 219:3; AC 4110:2, 4172e, 7298:2; SD 468

<sup>143</sup> DP 130

<sup>144</sup> DP 136:3,4; see HD 271; AC 2842:9

internal cannot flow into an external that is forced and rigid; it can just survive within itself until restraints are removed. Anyone can attest to this who remembers a state in which his freedom was seriously challenged by compulsion.

The essence of man, then, is his *internal* will and understanding, but in order to exercise free will in spiritual things—to change, compel oneself, repent, be reformed, or sink deeper into the love of evil—the man must be able to operate as a coherent unity, with internal flowing into external mind and body. That is the reason man chooses his eternal home while here on earth.

In explaining the states in which man cannot be reformed because his external man is not free, *Divine Providence* 129-153 present several interesting examples. Serious disease does not change man's internal will, and in that sense the internal will remains free, inviolate. Yet reformation is not then possible, "because the reason is not then in a free state, for the state of the mind [*mens*] depends upon the state of the body. When the body is sick the mind also is sick, because of its separation from the world—if for no other reason."<sup>145</sup> Temporarily man's free will in spiritual things is suspended or impeded, because his internal will is not free to change. It is free from being changed from without, but neither can it bring about change from within until health is restored to external mind and body. (It should be noted, however, that if a person was already reformed, then he may be strengthened during sickness.)

Disease is seldom an example of one man's decisions affecting another's freedom. But the Writings show that the same principles apply in such man-produced afflictions as threats, punishments, and compelled worship.<sup>146</sup>

Worship that is forced is corporeal, lifeless, vague and gloomy; corporeal because it is of the body and not of the mind, lifeless because there is no life in it, vague because there is no understanding in it, and gloomy because there is no heavenly delight in it. On the other hand, worship that is not forced, when it is genuine, is spiritual, living, clear and joyful: spiritual because there is spirit from the Lord in it, living because there is life from the Lord in it, clear because there is wisdom from the Lord in it, and joyful because there is heaven from the Lord in it.<sup>147</sup>

<sup>145</sup> DP 142

<sup>146</sup> DP 136, 137

<sup>147</sup> DP 137; see also AC 2880, 2881, 7349, 8392, 9588, 10097

It has been suggested that the Lord simply does not permit wrongful compulsion of man by man. This may seem to be a comforting thought, but then why do the Writings warn against it?<sup>148</sup> How can compelled worship in fact be "harmful"<sup>149</sup> (DP 136:4) if it is never permitted? If compulsion did not restrict free choice, then there would be nothing wrong with priests compelling. The prohibition against compulsion in many passages implies that compulsion is possible and can have some real effect on others.

Moreover, the Writings give examples of compulsion that actually occur. While some people do not permit themselves to be compelled to religion, there are some people who do.<sup>150</sup> The following also make plain that sometimes man does harmfully compel man:

He who is compelled to think what is true and do what is good is not reformed, but thinks falsity and wills evil all the more. All compulsion has this effect, as we may see from the records and examples of life....<sup>151</sup>

No good ever comes from compulsion, as when a man is compelled by another man to do what is good....<sup>152</sup>

A state of compulsion is...in a word, every state of fear which takes away the use of sound reason. When an evil man who in a state of compulsion promises repentance and also does what is good, comes into a state of freedom, he returns into his former life of evil.<sup>153</sup>

To compel a man is not to insinuate into his will, because it is then the will of another from which he acts; and therefore when he returns to his own will, that is, to his own freedom, this is rooted out.<sup>154</sup>

That which is inseminated in Freedom remains, because it is inrooted in the very will of man, which is the being of his life. But that which is insinuated under compulsion does not remain, because what is of compulsion is not from the will of the man, but is from the will of him who compels. For this

<sup>148</sup> AC 10798

<sup>149</sup> DP 136:4

<sup>150</sup> DP 136:4

<sup>151</sup> AC 1947

<sup>152</sup> AC 1937:7

<sup>153</sup> AC 8392

<sup>154</sup> AC 5854:2

reason worship from freedom is pleasing to the Lord, but not worship from compulsion....<sup>155</sup>

Whatever is not rooted in freedom is dissipated on the first approach of evil and temptation.<sup>156</sup>

[Some] are desirous that the things of faith should be believed in simplicity, without any mental view of them on the part of the rational, not being aware that not anything of faith, not even its deepest secret, is comprehended by any man without some rational idea, and also a natural one....Hereby they may indeed protect themselves against those who reason about everything from what is negative...; but to those who are in the affirmative concerning the Word...*such a position is hurtful, as they may thus take away from anyone his freedom of thought, and even bind the conscience to that which is in the highest degree heretical by in this way dominating both the internal and the external things of a man.*<sup>157</sup>

A number of passages, then, indicate that man's exercise of free will may be hindered or limited to some extent by the free actions of other men. We are reminded of the teachings noted earlier that man's freedom is in its perfection in his soul. Here it is inviolate. But as it descends into his lower planes it can be stopped, and freedom to be reformed may be hindered or temporarily suspended. (See THE ORGANIC UNITY OF MAN above.)

The possibility of harming others' freedom in spiritual things is the reason that in the spiritual sense of the Ten Commandments we are forbidden "to rob others of truths of their faith; and this is done by means of falsities and heresies. Priests [may be] spiritual thieves; for they rob the people of the means of salvation, which are the truths of faith."<sup>159</sup> "In the spiritual sense to bear false witness means to persuade people that what is false in faith is true, and that the evil of

<sup>155</sup> AC 9588

<sup>156</sup> AC 3854:2

<sup>157</sup> AC 3394e; emphasis added; see AR 427

<sup>158</sup> AC 7290:2; see also AC 2875, 4352:3, 2880, 4031, 4033, 5508:3, 7007:2, 8700:3, 9590, 10751e, 10777; HD 143, 148, 168; HH 293e; AE 1150:3,4; CL 208:3, where it is strongly implied that states of compulsion take place. Compare CL 298, 299, which outline steps to be followed so that a young woman's freedom may be preserved and an extorted consent to marry be avoided.

<sup>159</sup> TCR 318; see 320

life is the good of life, and the reverse; but to do this purposely, and not from ignorance...."<sup>160</sup> "In the spiritual sense, murder means every method of killing and destroying the souls of men. Varied and manifold are the methods employed, such as turning men away from God, religion and Divine worship, raising scandal against these, and persuasively insinuating aversion and loathing. Such murderers are all the devils and satans in hell...." (TCR 310; such spirits and men are also called "destroyers of souls.")<sup>161</sup> Such prohibitions certainly imply that man can harm another's spiritual life and freedom to be reformed.<sup>162</sup>

An important passage in this connection is *Arcana Coelestia* 4171, which teaches that "actual evil" in man has "various origins—in general two: one, that he receives evil from others *through no fault* of his own; and the other, that he receives it of his own accord, thus through his own fault. That which a man receives from others without any fault of his own is what is signified in the Word by 'what is torn'...." One example of this is a good man who is persuaded that not a life of good, but faith alone brings about salvation. If such a man "than becomes careless in regard to life, and even treats it with contempt, he is said to be 'torn'; for 'torn' is predicated of good into which falsity is insinuated, and *thereby* the good becomes no longer living." Another instance is of married partners who come into evil because they allow themselves to be persuaded that marriage is only for the sake of various worldly uses—"the result being that after he has received the persuasion the individual has no heavenly idea of marriage; and supposing that lasciviousness is the consequence, there then comes into existence that which is called 'torn'; and so in all other cases." Since such a person "receives evil from others without any fault of his own," eventually he is able to see the truth, live by it, and so be saved.<sup>163</sup>

<sup>160</sup> TCR 322

<sup>161</sup> See also AE 866:4.

<sup>162</sup> Recall also the example of celibates freely choosing to live unmarried at the sides of heaven—which they would not have done if they had not lived in societies favorable to celibacy. And compare TCR 446-449 on the implications of the friendship of love. The suffering caused in another by an evil friend seems to be temporary in this instance. Yet may such an interior friendship affect the type of eternal choices made, as well as the kind of temporary vastation after death? TCR 120:2; AC 6666e show that the presence of evil within a group tends to affect—indeed, infect—all who are in the group, see AE 1147:2.

<sup>163</sup> See AC 4172.

But it also would seem that the evil he has come into because of others will have some permanent consequences for him. While in another time and place he might have been hearing the truth and shunning evils so as to be led more directly through regeneration, instead his good becomes "no longer living", at least temporarily, and actual evils are brought into his life.

## Divine Fairness and Human Equality

The doctrine that all can be regenerated, "everyone according to his state,"<sup>164</sup> (TCR 579) can bear careful reflection. And we should be cautious with the teaching that those who are good but ignorant of Divine truth can be regenerated after death.<sup>165</sup> These doctrines do not say that whatever society man is born into, whatever heredity is passed on to him, whatever intellectual and affectional influences others exert on him, he can be reformed and regenerated as much as any other man. Those who are within the Lords Church can be conjoined with the Lord "in respect to His Divine rational", but those who are without the Church, if they are good, "are conjoined with the Lord in respect to His Divine natural. They who have a still grosser kind [of holiness] are conjoined with the Lord in respect to His Divine sensual....In this conjunction are those among the Gentiles who worship idols, and yet live in charity in accordance with their religion."<sup>166</sup> Thus the kind and level of conjunction with God that a person enjoys may depend partly on the type of church and society in which he lives.

Why should this be so? Man's spiritual development depends not only upon his free *will*, but also upon the *ideas* that are available to him for directing his thought and life. In explaining spiritual enlightenment, reformation and regeneration, *de Verbo* XII says that first the memory must have knowledges

of spiritual and natural things, for these are the stores into which the Lord operates by means of the light of heaven, and the fuller these are and the more free from confirmed falsities, the more enlightened is the perception given and the clearer the conclusion. For the Divine operation does not fall into a man who is empty and void, as for example one who does not know that the Lord is pure love and pure mercy...; or who does not know that the Word in the sense of the letter is written in

<sup>164</sup> TCR 579

<sup>165</sup> AC 4167:2

<sup>166</sup> AC 4211:3

many places from appearances. Such a man cannot be enlightened by the Word where it is said of Jehovah that He is wrathful and angry....<sup>167</sup>

The truths that man does or does not come into contact with are of considerable importance to his regeneration or lack thereof. "To believe what is false is hurtful."<sup>168</sup> Else why would it matter whether man has contact with the Word? Though the Lord wills that every man be reborn to the celestial degree<sup>169</sup> (AC 1799:2), it is not said that all men born into the world have the same opportunities of celestial regeneration.

The ideology of democracy has many uses on the civil plane, but in considering spiritual things we must distinguish secular notions of equality from Divine ideas of equality. Every man can be regenerated, "according to his state," but such passages as the following show that the spiritual equality, fairness and justice do not imply spiritual sameness.

Now since a man, a Christian, knows the Lord and has the Word, and since the Church is with him from the Lord by the Word, it is evident that he *more than a man not a Christian* has the ability to become regenerated and so to become spiritual, and also to attain love truly conjugal....After death the damnation of Christian polygamists is more severe than the damnation of those who commit only natural adultery.<sup>170</sup>

*For the Israelitish nation it was permitted to marry more wives than one because with that nation there was no Christian Church, and hence no possibility of love truly conjugal...They with whom the Christian Church does not exist are natural men, both internally and externally. With such men polygamy, being inscribed on the natural man, is not hurtful; for, as regards love in marriage, the natural man perceives only such things as belong to lust. The Lord....alone opens the internal things of human minds and, making them spiritual, implants them in things natural, that these also may receive a spiritual essence. This they do receive if man approaches Him and lives according to His precepts.*<sup>171</sup>

<sup>167</sup> See also AC 4136:2

<sup>168</sup> AE 895:2

<sup>169</sup> AC 1799:2

<sup>170</sup> CL 339:3; emphasis added; see 130

<sup>171</sup> CL 340

*It is permitted Mohammedans at this day to marry many wives because they do not acknowledge the Lord Jesus Christ to be one with the Father, and thus as the God of heaven and earth, and hence cannot receive love truly conjugal....The followers of Mohammed could not acknowledge our Lord as any God from eternity, but only as a perfect natural man....They could not but pass the Lord by....They do not know what the Lord taught. It is from this cause that the interiors of their mind...could not be opened; that they can be opened only by the Lord, see no. 340 just above. The genuine reason why they are opened by the Lord when He is acknowledged and is approached as the God of heaven and earth is because otherwise there is no conjunction, and without conjunction there is no reception.*<sup>172</sup>

[Polygamists] remain natural and do not become spiritual; and the natural man cannot see that there is any sin in such things as are of the received religion; this the spiritual man alone sees.<sup>173</sup>

Although they may have heard and read these things, yet they cannot give up the idea which was conceived in boyhood and *confirmed in them afterwards by their teachers, and which has so closed up their rational faculty that they are incapable of seeing, that is, of understanding these words of the Lord....*<sup>174</sup>

The men of the Ancient Church, and still more the men of the Israelitish Church, were external and natural men, nor *could they become internal and spiritual, as men can since the Lord's coming.*<sup>175</sup>

The time and place of man's life, and the quality of truths with which he comes into contact, would seem to have considerable influence on his freedom and ability to be regenerated.<sup>176</sup>

Some have argued that such passages refer only to regeneration on earth, and that all such apparent inequities are rectified by the possibility of regeneration after death.<sup>177</sup> Can non-Christians be regenerated later, and polygamists eventually receive love truly

<sup>172</sup> CL 341

<sup>173</sup> CL 348: see 345

<sup>174</sup> AR 618; emphasis added; compare the crucial proviso about "right education" in DP 317.

<sup>175</sup> Coronis 51:2; emphasis added; see TCR 109; AC 4189, 4197:1, 4211:3

<sup>176</sup> See also HH 349-351, 356:3, 363, 516, 521e, 528, 535.

<sup>177</sup> see AC 4167:2

conjugal? In fact something of this does take place, but apparently only to a limited degree. Some Moslems, for example, become Christians after death and receive genuine conjugal love. But others do not, and there is a distinctly Moslem heaven of two planes, It is outside the Christian heaven, and while in the higher Moslem heaven they live with one wife only and acknowledge the Lord Jesus Christ as *equal with* God the Father, in the lower Moslem heaven they live in polygamy, "honorably."<sup>178</sup> In neither heaven is the Lord Jesus Christ acknowledged as *one* with God the Father.<sup>179</sup> Thus living a Moslem life does not necessarily deprive a person of receiving Christianity and conjugal love. But the two-fold Moslem heaven demonstrates that with many the Moslem religion exerts a strong influence and limits their ability and freedom to become Christian.

Thus the ability to be regenerated (referred to in CL 339-341, 348)—an ability limited by the quality of truths which a man is taught—does not refer merely to regeneration on earth. The persistence of the lowest heavens shows that limited spiritual development on earth leads many to a relatively low state of heavenly good as their *eternal* lot. The quality of truth which a church and society come to value through the generations has major consequences in determining the eternal spiritual home of those who are nurtured therein. It is difficult to believe, for example, that the free decisions of many generations who established Moslem life and values have not influenced and limited the freedom of their Moslem descendants; that regardless of the free decisions of those past generations, the Moslem heavens would exist anyway. If some Moslems today live in polygamy in a low natural heaven, must not that fact result partly from the free decisions of previous generations to live in polygamy? The very reason a good Moslem can be polygamous in his heaven is because of polygamy in the religion in which he was raised. The Lord has permitted Islam so to teach for very good reasons,<sup>180</sup> but polygamy was not from Him; it could only have come from the ways of life chosen by many past generations of men.

When we read that "everyone is reformed according to his state and faculty,"<sup>181</sup> we should take care to emphasize "according to his state and faculty." The parable of the talents<sup>182</sup> teaches a variety in

<sup>178</sup> TCR 832

<sup>179</sup> See CL 78, 342, 343, 348, 352; TCR 832; de Conjugio 47, 48; DP 255.

<sup>180</sup> CL 342:4

<sup>181</sup> AC 2967:2; see TCR 579

<sup>182</sup> Matt. 25:14-30; Luke 19:12-27

individual spiritual capabilities. "All who are being reformed and regenerated are gifted with charity and faith by the Lord, but each according to his faculty and his state; for there are evils and falsities with which man has imbued himself from infancy, which stand in the way of one person's receiving a like gift with another....[Remains] are acquired from infancy even to the time of reformation, with one person more, with another fewer."<sup>183</sup> Can it be the Lord's doing if one has received more remains than another? Apparently human decisions—in this case, especially parents'—can affect the quality of another's eternal life, for "according to the quality and quantity of the remains—that is, of the good and truth with a man—does he enjoy bliss and happiness in the other life...."<sup>184</sup>

"Unfair!" cries out the democracy in which we have been educated, with which our concepts are permeated. But "My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts."<sup>185</sup> The only way to understand true fairness is not to extrapolate from human documents (however enlightened on the civil plane), but to learn from Divine revelation what Divine fairness actually is. Before we insist that Providence would not allow something, let us see from the Word just what Providence does and does not permit. When we think some Divine way is unfair, we may simply not yet understand what Divine justice is.

Divine fairness in fact exceeds human fairness because the Lord treats everyone not as the same, but as the unique individual he is. Human equality tends towards sameness, but the Divine accommodates to each individual in a manner unique to that individual. We should be more impressed with the Lord's ability to accommodate to every human state and to save people surrounded from birth to death by gross falsities and disorders, than we should be disturbed by the apparent inequity arising from His inability to change men after death and make them all true Christians.

*Divine Providence* 254 in particular speaks to this point:

For it makes no difference whether they are in such joy as that experienced by the angels of the highest heaven or by the angels of the lowest heaven, since everyone who enters heaven comes into the highest joy of his own heart; anything

<sup>183</sup> AC 2967:2; see 530, 560, 649, 2284:3

<sup>184</sup> AC 2284:3; see 530, 660, 1906

<sup>185</sup> Isaiah 55:9,10

greater he does not assume, for he would be suffocated by it. For illustration of this compare a peasant and a king. A peasant may be in a state of the highest joy when he goes about in a new suit of rough homespun, and sits down at a table on which is pork, a piece of beef, cheese, beer and common wine; and he would be distressed at heart if he were to be clothed like a king in purple, silk, gold and silver, and if a table were to be set for him with delicacies and costly food of many kinds with noble wine. From this it is clear that there is heavenly happiness for the least as well as for the first, for each in his degree....<sup>186</sup>

If both a thimble and a bucket are filled, it cannot be said that one is more full than the other; each is filled to capacity.

Dissatisfaction at apparent inequalities of heavenly blessing would appear to involve a desire by the natural man for more of a heavenly reward than would be suitable or even bearable for a given human life. But "in heavenly joy there is never anything connected with being pre-eminent to others, and...in proportion as there is this, there is hell."<sup>187</sup> Surely the lower angels do not find themselves dissatisfied because higher angels have "more" joy than they. Envy simply has no place in heaven.<sup>188</sup> To the natural man the desire for heavenly equality seems only fair, but Divine revelation testifies that the natural man does not appreciate the ways of God.

But would we really want it any other way? Would we really want Providence so to control human relationships that whatever we say and do to another, there would never be any lasting effects on him? Do we really want our free choices to affect only ourselves in a permanent way? Would we be happy believing that however we decide to act towards others, the Lord will ensure that only the utmost good will ever result? How would we like to believe that our every word and deed will make no real difference to anyone else, will matter not a whit except to ourselves? What may seem fair to the natural man would in fact enclose every human in a tight little box from which he could have no genuine relationship with anyone, except with God and with self. Every human relationship is in fact illusion, unless by our free choices we can have real and lasting influences on others.

It appears, then, that not only is man free in some degree in his natural actions, but he may also, through his decisions, have important and even eternal influences, good or evil, upon others—

<sup>186</sup> DP 254:3-4; see 250:2, 326:9,10; AC 8478; HH 278, 364; SD 5790 1/2

<sup>187</sup> AC 1936:4; see HH 35

influences that would otherwise not take place. One man's free decisions may even restrict or temporarily suspend another's freedom and rationality. Further study is needed to examine *how great* an eternal effect one may have upon another. *How much* will various states of non-freedom or restricted freedom affect a man's eternal life?<sup>189</sup> How great is the influence of past generations' free decisions upon a present generation's eternal free choices? How responsible is man for another's eternal happiness?<sup>190</sup> Parent for child? Spouse for spouse?

The unanswered questions are many, and we may never attain precise answers in day-to-day life.<sup>191</sup> My present concern is simply to establish that some such lasting influences exist. Were this not so, the study of human relationships would have no spiritual relevance.

The applications to life are myriad. For example, organized New Church bodies have generally stood strongly for the protection of the freedom of individuals associated in any way with the Church. This would be irrelevant if the Lord by Himself alone protected man's free will in spiritual things. If freedom of speech and action were not important for preserving man's freedom in spiritual things, there would be no serious reason for preserving freedom of speech and action. New Church leaders have written eloquently to show that free speech and action are essential to the life of the Church.<sup>192</sup> The political and social implications are likewise far reaching.

Man's freedom then, is not purely spiritual and unconnected with actual life on earth. Because man is an organic unity, his spiritual life and freedom are connected with what he actually does, with what goes on around him, and with truth available to him. The spiritual and natural are created to be one in man and his spiritual freedom is related to his natural freedom as fountain to stream,<sup>193</sup> even as his love and action are closely connected by correspondences. It is because all things in man are connected that human beings should co-operate with the Lord to respect and protect each other's freedom.

(To be continued.)

<sup>188</sup> See AC 1974; SD 2513, 2517-2520

<sup>189</sup> see AR 427

<sup>190</sup> see AE 1226:6; AC 8719

<sup>191</sup> See DP 175-189.

<sup>192</sup> See for example W. F. Pendleton, "Notes on the Government of the Church", *New Church Life*, Vol. XVII, pp. 106-109, (July, 1897); George de Charms, *Principles of Government*, Academy Book Room, Bryn Athyn, 1960, Chapter VI pp. 60-74; W. D. Pendleton, "The Law of the Pledge", *New Church Life*, Vol. LXXVII, pp. 51-55 (Feb., 1957).

<sup>193</sup> TCR 494