

How the Lord Governs Evil

If the Lord does not determine (cause) all things that happen in the natural world, the question arises, how does He govern evil and restrain it? One way He does not govern it is by simply never letting evil happen. What He permits is still evil. Permission of evil is only for the sake of good, but this does not mean that only good is permitted. Part of the Lord's governing of evil is allowing it to happen.

The question of *how* the Lord governs evil is one of the most difficult in theology, because good and evil are opposites and repel each other. Would not the Lord's governing presence with evil men torment and destroy their life? Their every effort is to flee from His good and truth. Yet we are taught frequently that the Lord's Providence is in every least singular, and somehow the Divine does govern evil men and the evils they do. The Divine Providence, not only with the good but also with the evil, is universal in the veriest singulars; and yet it is not in men's evils.¹⁹⁴

"And yet it is not in men's evils." Of course it could not be in their evils, and perhaps this is the key to seeing how the Lord governs evil. He cannot be with evil men in their hearts because this would only torture them. Rather His Divine truth can be present with them through some degree of enforced order in the externals of life. Thus the Lord is present in the hells and rules them by the external restraints of punishment and fear of punishment. "It ought to be known that the sole means of restraining the violence and fury of those who are in the hells is the fear of punishment. There is no other way."¹⁹⁵ Particularly malicious devils are set over the hells as governors, and sometimes angels look into the hells and moderate their insanities and disturbances.¹⁹⁶ The methods of governing hell are external, since the Lord cannot bring the devils' wills into order.

In the world punishments and the fears thereof are not the only means of governing evil. There are fears also for reputation, honor and gain, which depend to some extent upon the external customs

¹⁹⁴ DP 287

¹⁹⁵ HH 543; see 581.

¹⁹⁶ HH 220,543; *Coronis* 15e

and traditions in society. There are also laws and formal evil punishments on earth. The Writings say a great deal about the use of these means, but the method is always external—to keep the worst evils from destroying society and the human race. The evil "are led by the Lord but only by means of external bonds, which are fears on account of the penalties of the law and loss of reputation, honor, gain, and consequently pleasures. He leads them also by means of worldly rewards."¹⁹⁷

But the Lord also operates interiorly into the evil—not into their evil hearts, but into their unpervertable inmost souls. This inflowing operation does not stop their evils, but it does so regulate them that they may be continually restored to equilibrium and freedom, and so that some use may be served by their evils. One of the most comforting passages in the Writings says that the Lord's Providence

...continually grants permission for the sake of the end, and permits such things as pertain to the end *and no others*; and the evils that proceed by permission it continually keeps under view, separates and purifies, *sending away and removing by unknown ways whatever is not consistent with the end* [which is salvation]. These things are brought about in mans interior will, and from this in his interior thought.¹⁹⁸

"Nothing is permitted except for the end that some good may come out of it..."¹⁹⁹ "In the universal spiritual world reigns the end which proceeds from the Lord, which is that nothing whatever, not even the least thing, shall arise, except that good may come from it."²⁰⁰ When some evil occurs, it is useful to search out the good that sooner or later results from it. Appreciating this good should make the permission somewhat understandable, and demonstrate that the evil was not in fact the unmitigated tragedy that at first it may have appeared to be.

This comforting doctrine does not mean, however, that evil that is permitted is basically a good. Though good come out of it, evil is still evil. Good resulting from evil may not negate the evil, even though it moderates and mitigates it to some extent. This is obvious from

¹⁹⁷ AE 1189:4; see 1145:10,11,1164,1165.

¹⁹⁸ DP 296:8; emphasis added.

¹⁹⁹ AC 6489

²⁰⁰ AC 6574:3; see also 6663.

the fact that some people choose to go to hell. Thus *Arcana Coelestia* just quoted above, continues:

But as man has freedom, in order that he may be reformed, he is bent from evil to good so far as he allows himself to be bent in freedom, and (if he cannot be led to heaven) continually from the most atrocious hell, into which he makes every effort to plunge, into a milder one.

Much evil that is permitted results in eternal damnation, but still the Lord has kept the man free, and He has regulated the evil so that milder forms of evil and pain result than man would have chosen if left to himself.²⁰¹

The Lord's secret inner regulation of man is not by itself sufficient to restrain evil, because external restraints are also said to be necessary. Interior regulation of man's states keeps the evil man in equilibrium and freedom,²⁰² but the Writings put considerable emphasis upon the regulation of evils by external restraints. "The will and understanding of men function under this free choice; but the commission of evil in both worlds, the spiritual and the natural, is restrained by laws; otherwise society in both worlds would perish."²⁰³ The commentary on this heading states that this truth is so evident that it does not require explanation. "Without external restraints" not only would society perish, but also the entire human race, because man is obsessed by the loves of self and the world.²⁰⁴

We should see what this important teaching says and what it does not say. It does not say that man has no freedom in natural actions. It implies rather that he has some such freedom, since if he did not, then external restraints would not be needed. They are needed because he is given freedom in action. The teaching does say that this freedom of action is and should be restrained by external means, to some degree at least.²⁰⁵ Yet evil in action is still possible. In hell it is a daily occurrence, in spite of restraints. That evil in action occurs also in this world despite restraints, is not only evident to common perception but is also taught in the passage just referred to:

²⁰¹ For an example, see DP 310:3.

²⁰² See AC 10097; TCR 490,504:5.

²⁰³ TCR 497; this teaching is frequently repeated in the Writings.

²⁰⁴ TCR 498:2

²⁰⁵ See DP 129:2, 136:2.

That such is the inner nature of man becomes evident in seditious tumults, when the restraints of law are thrown off; and also in the slaughter and pillage which ensue when the signal is given to the victors to vent their fury on besieged townspeople who have been vanquished; scarcely one stays his hand till the order is heard. It is clear, therefore, that if men were not restrained by fear of punishment inflicted by law, not only society but also the whole human race would be destroyed.²⁰⁶

Man's evils do sometimes break out. "When evil enters the will, then it does harm, for then it also goes forth into act whenever external bonds do not restrain."²⁰⁷

In general the Lord rules the evil by an outermost plane of apparent conscience, which is really a sort of enlightened self-interest; "without this government these [the evil] would rush into all wicked and insane things, and do so rush when they are without the restraints of this plane. All those who do not allow themselves to be ruled by means of these planes are either insane, or punished according to the laws."²⁰⁸ Evil can actually be *removed* only by the "true use of free will in spiritual things,"²⁰⁹ and when through misuse of free will evil is active, then the means of control are external—punishments and fears. When these external means for some reason fail, as in war and revolution, hell literally breaks loose. History, sadly, is abundant in examples. This is not a comforting realization when we observe the failure of society's customary external restraints and fears, but we should not evade the truth because of its discomfort.

There are other means also by which the Lord governs evil. Often selfish motivation is used for unintended good purposes, "The Lord provides for His ends through the evil equally as through the good; for the Lord moves the evil through their very loves to do what is good to the neighbor, to their country, and the church.... In order that they may perform such things as are conducive to the public good, successes are also given them in accordance with their projects, which successes are greater incitements to them from the

²⁰⁶ TCR 498:3; see DP 251; DLW 262.

²⁰⁷ AC 6204; see 6203.

²⁰⁸ AC 4167:2

²⁰⁹ TCR 498e; see AE 1164, 1165.

fact that they ascribe them to themselves.²¹⁰ Good external achievements often result from the loves of self and the world.²¹¹

No one studies history for long without realizing how frequently events intended by man for one purpose bring about something entirely different. Many historical movements, such as the French Revolution as it actually developed, resulted from no conscious intention by anyone. No one planned the Renaissance or the decline and fall of the Roman Empire. Paul's egotism was used for the establishment of the first Christian Church. The Israelites were used as a representative of a church to maintain communication between the Divine and the human race; they thought they were a chosen people for reasons almost opposite to the truth. Pagan, idolatrous tribes were used to punish the Israelites, and wars that take place today serve similar hidden uses.²¹² It appears that pagan Rome's love of dominion and external order was used so that the first Christian Church could grow. Impatient Henry VIII's longing for a male heir (along with some fascinating contemporary political and military relationships) served for the establishment of religious freedom in England and so among English-speaking peoples. Worldly loves of conquest, gold and glory were used to spread the Word throughout the world.²¹³ History and a man's own life are replete with examples of self-serving loves bringing about unintended good consequences.

It is also possible that the Lord uses the time of man's death in order to govern evil.²¹⁴ This is speculation, however, and some students of the Writings believe rather that the time of death is not determined by the Lord, but only foreseen by Him; and that from this foresight the Lord prepares man for his death. The role of the time of man's death in the government of evil needs further study.

Even more is further study needed on the subject of natural disasters—not those misfortunes which are the work of man, and which are therefore permissions, but physical disasters that happen apparently without human cause, such as earthquakes, volcanos, floods, serious storms, fires started by lightning. Are these in fact "acts of God," as insurance companies suggest? They are often

²¹⁰ AC 6481

²¹¹ See AC 4493e.

²¹² DP 251

²¹³ See AC 9354.

²¹⁴ See SD 5002,5003; AC 4493.

closely connected with important historical events, not to mention death and suffering. The weather plays a crucial role in history—particularly in its effect on military affairs and on the harvest, since hungry people frequently do things they would not otherwise do. Unusual growth of the fungus ergot on rye in France in 1789 was a major factor contributing to the mass delusion known as the "Great Fear," which in turn helped precipitate the French Revolution. The "Protestant Wind" in 1588 (which played an enormous part in destroying the Spanish fleet and so preserving religious freedom in England) was most unusual at that season. Did Divine Providence bring about the unusual winds for the sake of religious liberty, or foresee that the wind and storms would be there, and insinuate into the Spanish commanders when and where they should sail?²¹⁵ Or did Providence do none of these, or something else?

Some other historical examples include the destruction of ancient Cretan civilization by an apparent earthquake and tidal wave; an eclipse during the Athenian invasion of Sicily which led to major developments in the Peloponnesian War, on account of the Greeks' superstition; the terrible earthquake in Lisbon in 1756; the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah; the cyclones that periodically ravage peoples who live near oceans; the winter of 1941-1942 in Russia; and the weather and tidal conditions in the English Channel in 1940, and again in June, 1944.

Different students of the Writings see such events in different ways. Some believe the Lord directly controls natural ultimates like the weather and other purely physical forces. The basis for this interpretation lies in the doctrines of Providence operating in every least singular, and of government of mediates by means of ultimates.²¹⁶ Consider also such passages as the following: "There is no such thing as chance, and...apparent accident or fortune, is Providence in the ultimate of order..."²¹⁷ "The truth Divine which flows into the third heaven nearest the Lord, also at the same time and without successive formation flows in down to the ultimates of order, and there from the First immediately also rules and provides each and all things..."²¹⁸ The weather in the land of Canaan before the Lord's First Coming appears to have varied at least somewhat

²¹⁵ See DP 252.

²¹⁶ AE 1086:5, etc.; see *The Organic Unity of Man* above.

²¹⁷ AC 6493; see SD 4562,4567.

²¹⁸ AC 7270:4

according to the spiritual states of the Israelites.²¹⁹ Other students doubt that the Lord intervenes in the natural operation of the weather in any special way. They suggest rather that the Lord foresees purely natural events that occur in the fixed ultimate patterns of this world (produced by "non-living endeavors") and uses them by preparing men for their consequences and by secretly guiding men to be present or absent during their occurrence.²²⁰

The subject remains an open question. When a disastrous earthquake, storm or drought takes place, what are its causes—fixed, unchanging patterns in nature, or an immediate influx into physical ultimates that causes some unusual natural event? To what extent is nature alive? What is meant by non-living endeavor?²²¹ How does spiritual influx into dead elementary matter differ from influx into man, animal, and plant? Perhaps the alternatives are not very far apart, but further study is needed.

The foregoing surveys some of the general teachings about how the Lord governs the doing of evil. The universal to hold in mind is that no evil is permitted except for the sake of some good end. The Writings invite us to see these goods,²²² but we should not think that such goods will always negate the evils. Man may resist every effort of the Lord and do his best to precipitate himself into evil and slavery. It may even be possible for man to live in such a way that he destroys his own freedom of choice.²²³ Moreover, though permission results in some good, the evil that is permitted remains evil and is not a good. The Lord's permitting is good because He can do only good, but what He permits is evil, and, if man would allow, something better would be preferable. The degeneration of men before the Lord's First Coming was a permission, beautifully governed by the Lord so that the individual was still free to be saved, and so that even worse evils were avoided, until the Lord by His

²¹⁹ See Deut. 28:1-6,8,11,12,15-24,38-42; etc.; AC 3147:10.

²²⁰ See DP 252; the fullest consideration of this subject that I am aware of is contained in the somewhat inconclusive study by Hugo Lj. Odhner, "The Doctrine of Ultimates and the Nature of Matter," published posthumously in *New Philosophy* LXXVII, pp. 127-163 (Oct.-Dec, 1974).

²²¹ DLW 311

²²² DP 187,189

²²³ The sin against the Holy Spirit, involving profanation and/or interior deceit, may involve such a loss of freedom; see AC 9013:6,7; 9818:27; AE 778.

Coming could bring redemption. But this degeneration was still evil, not willed by God, but chosen by man.

It is an important question because if we try too hard to see universal human existence as good, we may come to see what is evil as good. Some even have come to feel that whatever they choose to do, the Lord will protect and care for them. Though in practical application the distinction between good and evil often seems fuzzy, spiritually the difference between them is the difference between heaven and hell.²²⁴ The need to see good in others should not make us so fearful of intolerance that we refuse to recognize disorder or to believe in the existence of evil.²²⁵ Everyone wants to understand good, but it is his understanding of evil and ability to distinguish it from good that will set mans course, on earth and after death.

Providence and Order

In order to understand how the Lord governs the human race we must see more than the ends, uses, and goods of Providence. We must study also the means, truths, and order of Providence—even as any use is defined by the order associated with it, or any good by its truth. To know what the Lord *wishes* is not enough. We must also understand *what means* He uses.

The first and universal law of the order of Providence—repeated frequently in the Writings—is that man is a free and rational being, and can be changed only by means of that freedom and rationality. The direction of man's life is to a large extent his to determine, not because he always does a good job at it, but because otherwise man would not be man. This is expressed clearly in *Arcana Coelestia* 6487:

When I was talking with the angels about the Divine Providence of the Lord, there were spirits also present, who had impressed on themselves some notion about fate or absolute necessity. *They supposed the Lord to act from necessity*, because He cannot proceed otherwise than according to the things that belong to the most perfect order. But they were shown that man has freedom, and that *if he acts from freedom, it is not from necessity*. This was illustrated by the case of houses which are to be built, in that the bricks, mortar, sand, stones serving for foundations and columns, also timbers and beams, and the like, are brought together not in that order in which

²²⁴ See C. S. Lewis, *The Great Divorce*.

²²⁵ See CL 444.

the house is to be constructed, but at pleasure; and that the Lord alone knows what kind of house *may* be built with these materials. All the things which are from the Lord are most essential; but *they do not follow in order from necessity, hut in a manner that is applicable to the freedom of man.*²²⁶

Where man acts from freedom, it is not from necessity. Why is this central to the order of Providence? Otherwise man would not be man and could have no life or happiness, not even the fleeting pleasures of hell. This would frustrate the Divine love, which above all wishes that others may have life as if their own.²²⁷

In a series of lectures delivered at Cambridge in 1948 Professor Herbert Butterfield spoke of Providence in history in a manner reminiscent of the passage just quoted.

We might say that this human story is like a piece of orchestral music that we are playing over for the first time. In our presumption we may act as though we were the composer of the piece or try to bring out our own particular part as the leading one. But in reality I personally only see the part of, shall we say, the second clarinet, and of course even within the limits of that I never know what is coming after the page that now lies open before me. None of us can have already played it over together, and even so the meaning of a passage may not be clear all at once—just as the events of 1914 only begin to be seen in perspective in the 1940's. If I am sure that B flat is the next note that I have to play I can never feel certain that it will not come with surprising implications until I have heard what the other people are going to play at the same moment. And no single person in the orchestra can have any idea when or where this piece of music is going to end.

Even this analogy is not sufficiently flexible to do justice to the processes of time; and to make the comparison more authentic we must imagine that the composer himself is only composing the music inch by inch as the orchestra is playing it; so that if you and I play wrong notes he changes his mind and gives a different turn to the bars that come immediately afterwards, as though saying to himself: 'We can only straighten out this piece of untidiness if we pass for a moment from the major into the minor key.' Indeed the composer of

²²⁶ Emphasis added; see SD 4692m.

²²⁷ See DLW 47-50; TCR 43.

the piece leaves himself room for great elasticity, until we ourselves have shown what we are going to do next; although when the music has actually been played over and has become a thing of the past we may be tempted to imagine that it is just as he had intended it to be all the time—that the whole course of things had been inevitable from the first. If we were helping a small boy to ride a bicycle on an indefinite stretch of sand, we should not feel that each time he swerved and then tried to right himself we had to rectify his aberrations by bringing the course back into something like the straight line on which we had started the ride. We should be prepared for a considerable elasticity in regard to the general drift and direction of the whole expedition. In fact we should be playing Providence over a free creature; though I have no doubt that the particles in the fabric of the bicycle would be able to prove that the machine was guiding itself.²²⁸

Except for the suggestion that the composer changes his mind if you and I play wrong notes, this passage appears to present an accurate description of how history develops. The Writings show that God, far from changing his mind, foresees what all men will do, and provides or "composes" accordingly.²²⁹

The Lord could not grant man merely an inner spiritual freedom and then determine everything else without depriving man of the freedom to enjoy life as of himself. Freedom in natural events as well as spiritual is just one of many gifts that the Lord grants in addition to freedom of will and understanding. Let us look at some of the other things the Lord gives us for the sake of human life and happiness, in addition to freedom in actions:

- 1) Hereditary tendencies to good and evil.
- 2) Continued life among men on earth, even if free will is abused.
- 3) Spiritual spheres emanating from the character of man and spirit.
- 4) An order of influx and communication from spirit to spirit, and from the spiritual world into men in the natural world.

²²⁸ Herbert Butterfield, *Christianity and History*, Fontana Books, London and Glasgow, 1957, pp. 124-126

²²⁹ See AC 6487.

- 5) Influx of good and evil into natural forms on earth, producing both good uses and evil uses.²³⁰
- 6) An eternal character in accordance with our use of free will in spiritual things.
- 7) An ability to be ourselves after death, fully in the heavens, and in a more limited way in the hells.
- 8) Eternal association with others of similar character to our own.
- 9) A spiritual environment in correspondence with our eternal character.
- 10) An ability to make fantasies according to our eternal character, if we so wish.
- 11) Historical development in the spiritual world (a sequence not of time, but of succession of states) involving false heavens, imprisonment and infestation of simple good spirits in the lowest earth, various other disorders, and three cataclysmic spiritual judgments.

Surely this list could be greatly expanded.

Now all these provisions and allowances, though intended to enrich human life, are frequently abused and corrupted by man. Yet they are given us because without them man could not enjoy the life that the Lord wishes to give us. What would life be like without any of these? The Lord truly loves us and gives us so much for our happiness, even though he knows we may choose to abuse every gift. He gives all these because He loves us and wants us to be happy.

The gift of free will in natural actions is thus but one of many things the Lord grants in addition to the purely spiritual freedom of affection and thought. As human life would suffer without any of the gifts listed above, so also would it suffer if there were no freedom in natural action. The reasons involve primarily the organic unity of man, or of his will and thought with his action and speech. The following passage sums up the necessity of some freedom in action:

The reason why the evil succeed in accordance with their skill, is that it is according to order that everyone should do what he does from reason and also from freedom; and therefore unless it were left to man to act in freedom according to his reason, and thus also unless the consequent arts succeeded, the man could not possibly be disposed to receive eternal life.... Unless a

²³⁰ See DLW 336-348; AR 888e.

man is kept in the freedom to do evil also, good from the Lord cannot be provided for him.²³¹

Doing and succeeding are part of life even as are willing and thinking. This is why man's freedom to do is of order.

The order of Providence is not difficult to understand abstractly, but holding it in mind in practical applications is another matter. "It is one thing to think from causes, and another to think about causes..."²³² Similarly it is one thing to know the order of Providence, and another to think from it. It is one thing to know the doctrine of free will, and another to think from it.

I submit that the doctrines of Providence and free will are difficult to enter into sufficiently so as to think from them. The appearance to the natural man is that Providence operates sporadically, in special acts that go beyond or against the normal order of things; and that man is a non-free machine that is caused to do things, rather than something that is free in itself. The truth is that Providence is always operating, always according to order, present both in apparent fortune and misfortune. And man cannot be said to be *caused to do whatever he does freely*.²³³ When man is free, *nothing* causes or makes him do something—nothing except his own free decision. Yet it is difficult to think in this way; modern man searches for the causes of all things, including human feelings, ideas, and decisions. Many social scientists believe that the causes of everything human gradually will become known. Surely there is much to learn about causes in human actions, relationships, and development. Yet when we study man we reach a point where we cannot know if he did something on account of some cause outside of himself, or because he freely, arbitrarily decided in himself that he was going to do it. To the extent that the latter is the case, the scientific study of man is limited and must yield to the theological truth that man is endowed by his Maker with freedom.

Reflection upon *True Christian Religion* 502 suggests the difficulty we have in thinking *from* the order of Providence. This passage lists many questions which man will ask if he does not understand that Divine omnipotence operates according to order:

²³¹ AC 10777

²³² DLW 202

²³³ See Alfred Acton, "Divine Government and Human Freedom of Choice," address to Thirteenth General Assembly, *New Church Life*, Vol. XLVIII, pp. 533-557 (Sept., 1928).

He would, therefore, ask such absurd questions as these: "Why did the Lord come into the world, and in this way bring about redemption when God, by His omnipotence, could have accomplished the same work from heaven as He brought about when on earth? Why should He not, by redemption, have saved the whole human race without exception, and why should the devil afterwards be able to prevail over the Redeemer in man? Why is there a hell? Could not God, from His omnipotence, have blotted it out, and can He not now blot it out, or deliver all from it and make them angels of heaven? Why a last judgment? Could not God transfer all the goats from the left hand to the right, and make them sheep?... Why did He not originally, or why does He not still, make the whole world a paradise, where there should be no tree of knowledge of good and evil, and no serpent? where all the hills should flow with generous wines, and yield gold and silver each in its virgin state? and where all men might live as images of God with songs of jubilee, and with perpetual festivity and rejoicing? Would not all this be worthy of an omnipotent God?" These and similar questions would he ask.

But, my friend, this is all idle talk. The Divine omnipotence is not without order. God Himself is Order; and from order, in order and for order. There is an order into which man was created, namely, that his happiness or his misery should depend on his free will in spiritual things. For, as was said above, without free will man could not have been created.

They are all absurd questions, but the frequency with which they (or their modern variations) are asked suggests that the order of Providence is easier to think *about* than to think *from*. To know about the order of Providence and free will is not to *think from* that order.

Faced with opposition to their will, men throughout history have attacked the concept of free will and have sought to force on others their own brand of goodness. A perennial popular idea is that the evil do not stay in hell to eternity—which is really a denial of mans free choice in spiritual things.²³⁴ Much legislative reform, particularly on social issues, tries to provide answers to problems that can really be solved only by change of the human heart through free will. Today's intellectual climate of opinion contains much that is negative towards free will, and affirmative instead towards

²³⁴ See TCR 160.

conditioning and compelling man, as an animal or a machine, into various human concepts of good. The Lord guards man's freedom as man guards the pupil of his eye,²³⁵ but when man finds his will frustrated, the principle of freedom is often the first to be challenged.

One of the reasons New Church men may not think from this doctrine as fully as they might is perhaps that their freedom is in practice not seriously threatened. They generally try to respect the freedom of others and believe parents should not totally dominate their children. In spite of some gradual and subtle government encroachments, the New Church and its institutions have enjoyed considerable freedom of action and may not feel individual freedom under attack. It may be that serious struggle against threats to freedom is necessary for man to enter fully into the doctrine of Providence and free will. Historically, increased understanding of freedom, and respect for others' freedom, have emerged from periods of conflict; one example of this is the establishment of the General Church of the New Jerusalem. It is no accident that some of the clearest statements concerning freedom have come from New Church leaders who daily wrestle with the question of preserving the freedom of the church while still providing for its uses. If in fact struggle is needed to understand Providence and freedom, the coming generations may provide that struggle.

(To be concluded.)

235 DP 97

Freedom of Choice

That man would have no freedom of choice in civil, moral, and natural things, if he had none in spiritual things, is evident from this, that spiritual things, which are called theological, have their seat in the highest region of his mind, like the soul in the body. They have their seat there because there is the door through which the Lord enters into man. Beneath these are things civil, moral, and natural, which in man receive all their life from the spiritual things that have their abode above them. And because life from the highest regions flows in from the Lord, and man's life is an ability to think and will freely, and to speak and act therefrom, it follows that his freedom of choice in political and natural affairs is from that source and no other. From that spiritual freedom man has a perception of what is good and true, and of what is just and right in civil matters; and this perception is the understanding itself in its essence (TCR 482).