

Questions and Comments

1. How often do we think about heaven and want to go there? Is this an essential part of religion?
2. DP 60 speaks of "a knowledge of the way from walking in it, and walking in the way through a knowledge of it." We can picture walking in a national or state park with a guide who knows the way from having walked the trails for years, and really knows what to look for; as compared with following a map, "walking in the way through a knowledge of it."

How does this imagery apply to learning a new job and growing into it, and then helping a new colleague learn the ropes? How does this apply to getting married, and then being married for many years?

3. The Lord's goal for us is that we should each become an affection of good and truth. What are some of the goods that the Lord wants us to love? Think of an older person you love and respect: what sort of an affection is he or she?
4. Isn't it wonderful that the Lord's inmost goal is to create a special place in heaven for each of us? "In My Father's house are many dwellings; I go to prepare a place for you... that where I am, there you may be also" (John 14:2-3). What does this imply about the variety of loves and views among us?
5. In no. 69, we see that the Lord loves us to have free choice, and grants that we may live forever as we have chosen. "If I make my bed in hell, behold, Thou art there" (Ps. 139:8). What does this imply about the way we love our neighbor as ourselves?

The Laws of the Divine Providence

Introduction: The First Three Chapters



Week 0

Psalm 19

- 1 The heavens recount the glory of God,
And the expanse tells the work of His hands.
- 2 Day unto day utters a saying,
And night unto night shows knowledge.
- 3 There is no saying and there are no words
Without their voice being heard.
- 4 Their line has gone out into all the earth,
And their statement into the end of the world.

In them He has set a tent for the sun,
- 5 And He, as a bridegroom going out from His chamber,
Has joy as a hero to run the path.
- 6 From the end of the heavens is His going out,
And His circuit upon the ends of them;
And there is nothing hidden from His heat.

The First Three Chapters of *Divine Providence*:

- I. Divine Providence is the Government
of the Lord's Divine Love and Wisdom.
- II. The Lord's Divine Providence has as its end
a heaven from the human race.
- III. The Lord's Divine Providence looks to what is
infinite and eternal in everything it does.

heaven consists of as many affections as there are angels, and each affection in its form is a man, it follows that it is the continual design of the Divine Providence that man may become a heaven in form and consequently an image of the Lord, and, since this is effected by means of the affection of good and truth, that he may become such an affection. Although this is the continual design of the Divine Providence, its inmost design is that a man may be in this or that place in heaven, or in this or that place in the Divine Heavenly Man; for thus he is in the Lord. This happens, however, only with those whom the Lord can lead to heaven; and as the Lord foresees this, He also provides continually that man may become like this; for in this way everyone who suffers himself to be led to heaven is prepared for his own place in heaven.

DP 69. The man, however, who does not suffer himself to be led to heaven and assigned there is prepared for his own place in hell. For man of himself continually tends to the lowest of the hells, but he is continually withheld by the Lord; and he who cannot be withheld is prepared for a certain place there, to which he also is assigned immediately after his departure from the world. This place is exactly opposite to one in heaven, for hell is the opposite of heaven. Therefore as the man who is now an angel has his place allotted to him in heaven according to his affection of good and truth, so the man who is a devil has his place allotted to him in hell according to his affection of evil and falsity. For two opposites, similarly arranged, are maintained in connected series over against one another. This is the inmost design of the Divine Providence in regard to hell.

Psalm 25

- 4 Make me to know Thy ways, O Jehovah;
Teach me Thy paths.
- 5 Make me to tread in Thy truth,
And teach me,
For Thou art the God of my salvation;
For Thee I wait all the day.

DP 60. IV. AN IMAGE OF THE INFINITE AND ETERNAL IS PRESENTED IN AN ANGELIC HEAVEN. Among the things of which it is necessary to have some knowledge is also the angelic heaven; for everyone who has any religion thinks about heaven and wishes to go there. But heaven is granted only to those who know the way to it and walk in that way. This way can be known to some extent by knowing the character of those who constitute heaven, and also by knowing that no one becomes an angel, that is, comes into heaven, unless he carries with him from the world something of the angelic character. And in this there is present a knowledge of the way from walking in it, and a walking in the way through a knowledge of it.

Moreover, in the spiritual world there are actually ways which lead to every society of heaven and to every society of hell, and each one, as if from himself, sees his own way. He sees it because there are ways there, one for every love; and love opens the way, and leads him to his fellows; nor does anyone see other ways than the way of his own love. From this it is clear that angels are nothing but heavenly loves, for otherwise they would not have seen the ways leading to heaven....

DP 69. Now since man by creation is a heaven in the least form, and consequently an image of the Lord, and since

THE DIVINE PROVIDENCE IS THE GOVERNMENT OF
THE DIVINE LOVE AND WISDOM OF THE LORD.

DP 1. In order that it may be understood what the Divine Providence is, and that it may be seen to be the government of the Lord's Divine Love and Wisdom, it is important that the propositions which have been advanced and illustrated concerning the Divine Love and Wisdom in the treatise on these subjects should be known. They are as follows:

- In the Lord the Divine Love [belongs] to the Divine Wisdom, and the Divine Wisdom [belongs] to the Divine Love (n. 34-39).
- The Divine Love and Wisdom cannot help but be and come forth in others created by themselves (n. 47-51).
- All things in the universe were created by the Divine Love and Wisdom (n. 52, 53, 151-156).
- All things in the universe are recipients of the Divine Love and Wisdom (n. 54-60).
- The Lord appears before the angels as a Sun, and the heat proceeding from it is Love and the light proceeding from it is Wisdom (n. 83-88, 89-92, 93-98, 296-301).
- The Divine Love and Wisdom which proceed from the Lord make one (n. 99-102).
- The Lord from eternity, who is Jehovah, created the universe and all things in it from Himself, and not from nothing (n. 282-284, 290-295).

These propositions are set forth in the treatise entitled ANGELIC WISDOM CONCERNING THE DIVINE LOVE AND WISDOM.

DP 2. ...However, as in that work creation itself was discussed and not the preservation of the state of things after creation, which is the Lord's government, we shall now take up this subject. We shall consider in this section the preservation of the union of the Divine Love and the Divine Wisdom, or of the Divine Good and the Divine Truth, in the things that were created; and we shall speak of these in the following order:

I. The universe, with all things in general and in particular in it, was created from the Divine Love by means of the Divine Wisdom.

II. The Divine Love and the Divine Wisdom proceed from the Lord as one.

III. This one is in a certain manner imaged in every created thing.

IV. It is of the Divine Providence that every created thing, both as a whole and in part, should be such a one; and if it is not, that it should become so.

V. The good of love is not good except so far as it is united to the truth of wisdom; and the truth of wisdom is not truth except so far as it is united to the good of love.

VI. The good of love not united to the truth of wisdom is not good in itself, but only apparent good; and the truth of wisdom not united to the good of love is not truth in itself, but only apparent truth.

VII. The Lord does not allow anything to be divided. Therefore it must be either in good and at the same time in truth, or in evil and at the same time in falsity.

VIII. That which is in good and at the same time in truth is real; and that which is in evil and at the same time in falsity is not real.

IX. The Divine Providence of the Lord causes what is evil and at the same time false to serve for equilibrium, relation and purification, and so for the union of good and truth in others.

Questions and Comments

1. DP 46 says that we cannot comprehend the Infinite with our finite minds, and yet we can by abstract ideas, such as that He is Love itself and Wisdom itself, and even Man Himself, the One who is truly Human. Does it make sense to you to think of the Lord as being Love itself: the very essence of love and the source of love to all in the universe?
2. How can we withdraw a bit from ideas of space and time? If we think of God as Man in natural terms, we wonder how tall He is, how much He weighs, the color of His eyes, and so forth. Then we can't see how He can be omnipotent and omniscient. How do we overcome this limitation?
3. In what ways can we too look to what is infinite and eternal, not just to worldly and bodily goals and pleasures?

DP 46:3. From what has been shown in the treatise *The Divine Love and Wisdom*, it is clear that the Divine Essence is Love and Wisdom (n. 28-39); that the Divine Love and the Divine Wisdom are Substance itself and Form itself, and consequently the Self-subsisting and the one only subsisting Essence (n. 40-46); and that God created the universe and all things in it from Himself and not from nothing (n. 282-284). From this it follows that every created thing, and especially man, and the love and wisdom in him, *are* something and are not merely ideas of being. For unless God were Infinite there would be no finite; and unless the Infinite were the All there would not be anything; and unless God had created all things from Himself there would be nothing. In a word, We are because God is.

DP 47. The Divine Providence is the subject now being discussed, and it is to be shown here that in everything it does it regards the infinite and the eternal. As this cannot be clearly set forth except in an orderly way, the order will be as follows:

I. The Infinite in itself and the Eternal in itself is the same as the Divine.

II. The Infinite and Eternal in itself cannot but regard what is infinite [and eternal] from itself in finite things.

III. The Divine Providence in everything it does regards what is infinite and eternal from itself, especially in saving the human race.

IV. An image of the Infinite and Eternal is presented in an angelic heaven from a saved human race.

V. The inmost of the Divine Providence is to regard what is infinite and eternal in forming the angelic heaven, in order that it may be before the Lord as one man, the image of Himself.

Questions and Comments

1. How wonderful that the universe, and we in it, are governed by Divine Love and Wisdom! What are some competing theories about the universe that are popular either among the learned or in common culture?
2. The Lord's love and wisdom cannot help but do something for and with others. What does this teach us about truly human nature?
3. How does it help us to know that the Lord appears as the Sun of heaven, pouring love and wisdom and thus life into all the universe? What if we did not know this?
4. Providence is concerned with the preservation of the universe, or its continual re-creation. Compare parents caring for their children.
5. Providence is concerned with preserving the union of love with wisdom in created things. The Lord wants all of us to be one in Him. (See John 17.)
6. What is an illustration that love is not love without wisdom? And what is an example of how wisdom is not wisdom without love?
7. If evil and falsity are not real, why do they seem to have such an impact on us?

Job 12 ⁷ But ask now the beasts, and they shall teach thee; and the fowls of the air, and they shall tell thee; ⁸ Or speak to the earth, and it shall teach thee, and the fishes of the sea shall declare unto thee. ⁹ Who doth not know in all these that the hand of the LORD has wrought this?

Quoted in TCR 308

DP 3:2. That the universe, with all things in it in general and in particular, was created from the Divine Love by means of the Divine Wisdom can be confirmed from all things in the world that may be examined by the eye. Take any object in particular and examine it with some degree of intelligence, and you will be convinced.

Take a tree, or its seed, its fruit, its flower or its leaf, and summoning what wisdom you have, view it with a powerful microscope, and you will see wonderful things; yet there are more interior things that you do not see, still more wonderful.

Observe the order, step by step, in which the tree grows from the seed till it produces new seed; and consider whether there is not in every step a continuous effort to propagate itself further; for the goal to which it tends is seed, in which its propagative power exists anew. Then if you will but reflect upon this spiritually also – and you can do this if you please – will you not see wisdom displayed?

Moreover, if you will reflect deeply enough from the spiritual point of view, you will see that this propagative power is not from the seed, nor from the sun of this world which is pure fire, but that it is in the seed from God the Creator, to whom belongs infinite Wisdom. You will see that it is present not only at creation but also continuously afterwards; for maintenance is perpetual creation, as continued existence is a continual coming into existence.

Matthew 16 ²⁴ Then Jesus said to His disciples, If anyone will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. ²⁵ For whoever will save his soul shall lose it, but whoever shall lose his soul for My sake shall find it. ²⁶ For what is a man profited if he shall gain the whole world, but cast away his soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?

THE LORD'S DIVINE PROVIDENCE, IN EVERYTHING THAT IT DOES, REGARDS THE INFINITE AND THE ETERNAL.

DP 46. It is known in the Christian world that God is Infinite and Eternal.... From this it follows that, as God is Infinite and Eternal, nothing but what is Infinite and Eternal can be predicated of God.... God, because He is Infinite... is Love itself and Wisdom itself, or is Good itself and Truth itself, and thus is the Self – indeed is Man Himself. Such ideas also are present when it is said that the Infinite is the All, and that Infinite Wisdom is Omniscience, and that Infinite Power is Omnipotence.

[2] Yet these ideas fall into haziness of thought, and from being incomprehensible perhaps meet with denial. This happens unless those things which thought derives from nature are withdrawn from the idea, especially what it derives from the two things proper to nature, space and time, for these cannot but limit ideas and cause abstract ideas to be as nothing. However, if those things can be withdrawn in man as they are in an angel, then the Infinite may be comprehended by means of the ideas just mentioned above. Hence also it may be comprehended that man *is* because he was created by the Infinite God who is the All....

Questions and Comments

1. A key aspect of going to heaven and enjoying eternal life is acknowledging that we are not loving and wise, or good and true, from ourselves, but that all the real life in us is the Lord's. Do you remember an experience that brought home this truth to you?
2. How does it feel to think of being conjoined with the Lord? Is that scary?
3. Sometimes it seems it would be easier if we just had to learn a lot of things to go to heaven, rather than change our lives. What is one reason why this does not work?
4. It is a wonderful thing that the Lord gives us responsibility for our lives, even though we often mess up. What are some key steps to putting away the love of evil with its lusts?

DP 19. VIII. THAT WHICH IS IN GOOD AND AT THE SAME TIME IN TRUTH IS REAL; AND THAT WHICH IS IN EVIL AND AT THE SAME TIME IN FALSITY IS NOT REAL. ...By not being real is meant that it has no power and no spiritual life. Those who are in evil and at the same time in falsity – and all such are in hell – indeed have power among themselves; for one who is wicked can do evil, and does it in a thousand ways. Nevertheless, he can only do evil to the wicked from their evil, but cannot do the least evil to the good, except, as sometimes happens, by conjoining himself with their evil. This is the origin of temptations, which are infestations by the evil who are with men; and hence combats ensue, by means of which the good can be freed from their own evils.

DP 21. IX. THE LORD'S DIVINE PROVIDENCE CAUSES WHAT IS EVIL AND AT THE SAME TIME FALSE TO SERVE FOR EQUILIBRIUM, RELATION, AND PURIFICATION, AND SO FOR THE UNION OF GOOD AND TRUTH IN OTHERS.

DP 24. The union of good and truth is provided for by the Lord by means of relation.... For every delight is thus perceived and felt by comparison with what is less delightful and what is not delightful; everything beautiful by what is less beautiful, and what is ugly; and likewise every good, which is of love, by what is less good and by means of evil; and every truth, which is of wisdom, by what is less true and by means of falsity.

It should be known, however, that an opposite destroys as well as exalts perceptions and sensations. It destroys when it mingles them with itself and exalts when it does not. For this reason the Lord most carefully separates good and evil in man lest they should be commingled, just as He separates heaven and hell.

Questions and Comments

1. Do any examples come to mind of the marvels of creation showing that all things are created out of Divine love by means of Divine wisdom?
2. What does DP 3 indicate about New Church science?
3. What is an aspect of life in which you see the concept that maintaining things means continually creating them?
4. What does this principle imply about friendships, marriage, or raising children?
5. Can you think of examples in life or in movies or books illustrating that actually evil has no power, though sometimes it seems to have all power?
6. What is an example of evil or falsity serving to strengthen and clarify the sense of what is good and true?
7. Children growing up cannot avoid being exposed to some amount of evil and falsity, from within and from the culture. How can we help keep evil and falsity separate from what is good and true?

life conjoined to these. Man's life is his love, and love is manifold. In general, there is the love of evil and the love of good. The love of evil is the love of committing adultery, taking revenge, defrauding, blaspheming, and depriving others of their goods. The love of evil has a sense of pleasure and delight in thinking about these things and in doing them....

DP 33:2. Now because the Lord flows into the life's love of everyone, and through its affections into his perceptions and thoughts, and not the reverse... it follows that the Lord can conjoin Himself more nearly only so far as the love of evil with its affections, which are lusts, has been removed.

As these lusts reside in the natural man, and as whatever a man does from the natural man he feels as if he does from himself, therefore he ought, as if from himself, to remove the evils of that love; and as far as he does this the Lord draws nearer, and conjoins Himself to him. Anyone can see from reason that lusts with their delights obstruct and close the door before the Lord, and that these cannot be cast out by the Lord so long as man himself holds the door closed and, pressing from the outside, prevents it from being opened. That man himself ought to open the door is clear from the Lord's words in Revelation [quoted above].

DP 39:2. [Heavenly] joys enter as man, as if from himself but still from the Lord, puts away the lusts of the love of evil and falsity.... The joys of the affections of the love of good and truth begin from the Lord, thus from the inmost; and from there they pour themselves forth into lower things, even to the lowest, and thus fill the angel, making him become as it were wholly a delight....

Revelation 3 20 Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hear My voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and have supper with him, and he with Me.

John 14 21, 23 He who has My commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves Me; and he who loves Me shall be loved by My Father, and I will love him, and will manifest Myself to him... and My Father will love him, and We will come to him, and make an abode with him.

Quoted in DP 33

DP 28. I. HEAVEN IS CONJUNCTION WITH THE LORD. Heaven is not heaven from the angels but from the Lord; for the love and wisdom in which the angels are and which make up heaven, are not from the angels but from the Lord, and are, in fact, the Lord in them.... The angels themselves confess that they live from the Lord; hence it may be evident that heaven is conjunction with the Lord. Since, however, conjunction with the Lord varies in degree, and heaven accordingly is not the same to one as to another, it also follows that heaven is according to the conjunction with the Lord.

DP 30. The Lord's heaven in the natural world is called the Church; and an angel of this heaven is a man of the Church who is conjoined to the Lord; and after he leaves this world he becomes an angel of the spiritual heaven. From this it is clear that what has been said of the angelic heaven must also be understood of the human heaven that is called the Church.

DP 33. *How a man is more and more nearly conjoined to the Lord:* This is accomplished not by knowledge alone, nor by intelligence alone, nor even by wisdom alone, but by a

John 15 4 Remain in Me, and I in you; as the branch cannot bring forth fruit from itself, unless it remain in the vine, no more can you, unless you remain in Me. 5 I am the Vine, you are the branches; he who remains in Me, and I in him, the same brings forth much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing. 7 If you remain in Me, and My sayings remain in you, you shall ask whatever you will, and it shall be done to you. *Quoted in DP 30*

THE DIVINE PROVIDENCE OF THE LORD HAS FOR ITS END A HEAVEN FROM THE HUMAN RACE.

DP 27. Heaven is not from any angels created such from the beginning, and hell is not from any devil created an angel of light and cast down from heaven. Rather, both heaven and hell are from the human race— heaven from those who are in the love of good and thence in the understanding of truth, and hell from those who are in the love of evil and thence in the understanding of falsity. This has been proved to me by long association with angels and spirits....

DP 27:2. Now since heaven is from the human race, and heaven is an abiding with the Lord to eternity, it follows that this was the Lord's end in creation; and since this was the end in creation, it is also the end of His Divine Providence.

The Lord did not create the universe for His own sake, but for the sake of those with whom He will be in heaven. For spiritual love is such that it wishes to give what is its own to another, and so far as it can do this, it is in its being (*esse*), in its peace, and in its blessedness. Spiritual love derives this property from the Lord's Divine Love, which is such in an infinite degree.

From this it follows that the Divine Love, and consequently the Divine Providence, has for its end a heaven consisting of men who have become, and who are becoming angels, upon whom the Lord can bestow all the blessings and felicities that belong to love and wisdom, and bestow these from Himself in them. Nor can He do otherwise, for from creation there is in men the image and likeness of Himself – the image in them is wisdom, and the likeness in them is love. And the Lord in them is love united to wisdom and wisdom united to love; or what is the same, is good united to truth and truth united to good. This union was treated of in the preceding chapter.

DP 27:3. However, it is not known what heaven is in general or among many, and what it is in particular or in an individual, or what heaven is in the spiritual world and what it is in the natural world. And yet because it is important to know this, as heaven is the end of the Divine Providence, I will present this subject with some light in the following order:

I. Heaven is conjunction with the Lord.

II. Man by creation is such that he can be more and more nearly conjoined to the Lord.

III. The more nearly a man is conjoined to the Lord the wiser he becomes.

IV. The more nearly a man is conjoined to the Lord the happier he becomes.

V. The more nearly a man is conjoined to the Lord the more distinctly does he appear to himself to be his own [person], and yet the more evidently does he recognize that he is the Lord's.

Questions and Comments

1. The purpose of creation is a heaven from the human race! What does this imply about the purpose of our lives? What might it imply about the natural universe?
2. How can we cultivate spiritual love? How can we receive something of the Lord's wise love into us?
3. How comforting it is that the Lord says that He has as His end "a heaven of those who have become *or are becoming* angels." What does this imply about how we treat one another?
4. The Lord seeks to be ever more closely conjoined with us and we with Him. How can we cooperate?
5. The Lord wants us to feel more and more distinctly our own [person], while at the same time recognizing that we are His. What does this teach us about our conjunctions or relationships with other people, such as friends, co-workers, children and spouse?