

Questions and Comments

1. Can we have rationality without freedom?
2. What would happen if we didn't have rationality to go along with freedom or an understanding to go along with a will? Are there instances where we see what this might look like, such as intoxication, or mental illness?
3. What is "liberty itself" and "rationality itself"?
4. How is infernal freedom slavery, as it is stated in DP 97?
5. DP 97 says that "the Lord guards freedom in man, as man guards the pupil of his eye." Why is freedom so important to the Lord?
6. Why is it a law of Divine Providence that man should act in freedom according to reason?
7. Thinking ahead, what else in addition to freedom and rationality is necessary for the operation of Divine Providence?

The Laws of the Divine Providence



You shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free.

(John 8:32)

Man Should Act From Freedom According to Reason

Week 1

Outline of the Chapter

DP 72. As few are aware that [acting in freedom according to reason] can be a law of Divine providence... so that this may be clearly seen, the subject must be considered step by step, which shall be done in the following order:

I. <i>Man possesses reason and freedom, or rationality and liberty; and these two faculties are in man from the Lord.</i>	Day 1
II. <i>Whatever a man does from freedom, whether it be of reason or not, provided it is in accordance with his reason, appears to him to be his.</i>	Day 2
III. <i>Whatever a man does from freedom in accordance with his thought is appropriated to him as his, and remains.</i>	Day 3
IV. <i>It is by means of these two faculties that man is reformed and regenerated by the Lord; and without them he cannot be reformed or regenerated.</i>	Day 4
V. <i>By means of these two faculties man can be so far reformed and regenerated as he can be led by means of them to acknowledge that everything good and true that he thinks and does is from the Lord, and not from himself.</i>	Day 4
VI. <i>By means of these two faculties the conjunction of the Lord with man and the reciprocal conjunction of man with the Lord are effected.</i>	Day 5
VII. <i>The Lord preserves these two faculties in man inviolate and as sacred in the whole course of His Divine providence.</i>	Day 6
VIII. <i>Therefore it is [a law] of the Divine providence that man should act from freedom in accordance with reason.</i>	Day 6

For a man who does evil from the love of evil and confirms that evil in himself, acts from freedom in accordance with reason; and yet his freedom is not in itself freedom, or freedom itself, but it is an infernal freedom that is in itself slavery; and his reason is not in itself reason, but is either a spurious or a false reason, or what is made to appear by confirmations to be reason. Nevertheless they are both of the Divine providence; for if the freedom to will evil, and to make it appear by confirmations to be in accordance with reason were taken away from the natural man, liberty and rationality, and will and understanding with them, would perish, and he would have no ability to be withdrawn from evils and reformed, and thus conjoined with the Lord and live forever. Consequently the Lord guards freedom in man, as man guards the pupil of his eye. And yet by means of freedom, the Lord continually withdraws man from evils; and so far as He is able to withdraw him by means of freedom, He implants what is good by means of freedom. Thus in the place of infernal freedom, the Lord gradually endows man with heavenly freedom.

Jesus answered them, Amen, amen, I say to you that everyone doing sin is the servant of sin. And the servant does not abide in the house forever; the Son abides forever. If then the Son sets you free, you shall certainly be free.

John 8:34-36

DP 96. Man has will from no other source than being able to will freely as if from himself; and to will freely as if from himself is from a faculty continually given him by the Lord that is called liberty. And man has understanding from no other source than being able to understand as if from himself whether a thing is in harmony with reason or not: and to understand whether a thing is in harmony with reason or not is from the other faculty continually given to man by the Lord that is called rationality. In man these two faculties are conjoined, like the will and the understanding, in this respect, that man has the ability to understand because he has the power to will; for willing is not possible apart from understanding; understanding is its consort or mate, without which it cannot exist. This is why along with the faculty called liberty the faculty called rationality is given; and why if you take away willing from understanding you understand nothing.

DP 97. Therefore it is [a law] of the Divine providence that man should act from freedom in accordance with reason. To act from freedom in accordance with reason, to act from liberty and rationality, and to act from the will and the understanding, are the same thing. But it is one thing to act from freedom in accordance with reason, or to act from liberty and rationality, and it is another thing to act from freedom itself in accordance with reason itself or to act from liberty itself and from rationality itself.

You shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free.

John 8:32

DP 73. All freedom is a property of love, insomuch that love and freedom are one. And as love is the life of man, freedom also belongs to his life. For every enjoyment that man has is from his love; no enjoyment is possible from any other source; and acting from love's enjoyment is acting from freedom; for a man is led by enjoyment as a thing is borne along by the current of a river. Since, then, there are numerous loves, some harmonious and some discordant, it follows that there are likewise numerous kinds of freedom; but in general three, natural, rational, and spiritual.

Natural freedom every man has from inheritance. From it man loves nothing but self and the world: his first love is nothing else. Since all evils exist from these two loves, and hence also become evils of love, it follows that to think and to will evils is man's natural freedom; and that when he has confirmed evils in himself by reasonings he does evils from freedom in accordance with his reason. To act thus is from his faculty called liberty, and to confirm the evils is from his faculty called rationality.

Rational freedom is from the love of reputation with a view to honor or gain. The enjoyment of this love lies in appearing externally as a moral man; and because man loves such a reputation, he does not defraud, commit adultery, take revenge, or blaspheme; and because he makes this a matter of reason, he acts from freedom in accordance with his reason in sincere, just, chaste, and friendly ways; and furthermore, from this reason he can advocate such conduct. But if his rational is merely

natural and not also spiritual, such freedom is merely external freedom, not internal freedom; for he does not love these goods in the least inwardly, but only outwardly for the sake of his reputation, as has been said, and for this reason the good deeds that he does are not in themselves good.... Consequently, this rational freedom is a more internal natural freedom. This freedom, too, by the Lord's Divine Providence remains with everyone.

Spiritual freedom is from a love for eternal life. Into that love and its enjoyment no one comes except he who thinks evils to be sins and in consequence does not will them, and at the same time looks to the Lord. As soon as one does this he is in that freedom. For one's ability not to will evils because they are sins, and not to do them for that reason, comes from the more internal or higher freedom which is from his more internal or higher love. At first such a freedom does not seem to be freedom, and yet it is; and afterwards it so appears, and then man acts from freedom itself, in accordance with reason itself, in thinking, willing, speaking, and doing what is good and true. This freedom increases as natural freedom decreases and becomes subservient; and it conjoins itself with rational freedom and purifies it.

Any one may come into this freedom if he is but willing to think that life is eternal, and that the temporary enjoyment and bliss of life in time are but as a fleeting shadow, compared with the never ending enjoyment and bliss of a life in eternity; and this a man can think if he wishes, because he has rationality and liberty, and because the Lord, from whom these two faculties are derived, continually gives the ability.

Questions and Comments

1. What does it mean for love to be reciprocated?
2. When we think about a time when our love for someone has not been reciprocated we may be able to better understand what it is like when we do not reciprocate the Lord's love.
3. When we are being tempted, we can picture evil spirits trying to convince us to actually turn away from the Lord and withdraw as He approaches, like it says in DP 92.
4. DP 92 says "the Lord continually wills to draw near to man and to enter into him." What does this mean?
5. How are freedom and rationality related to the ability to reciprocate the Lord's love?

thinks truth not from himself but from the Lord, and consequently that the good he does and the truth he thinks are not his. To so think from some love in the will, because such is the truth, is what causes conjunction; for thus man looks to the Lord, and the Lord looks on man.

DP 93. It has been permitted me both to hear and see in the spiritual world the nature of the difference between those who believe all good to be from the Lord and those who believe good to be from themselves. Those who believe good to be from the Lord turn the face to Him, and receive the enjoyment and the blessedness of good. But those who believe good to be from themselves look to themselves and think in themselves that they are meritorious. And because they look to themselves they are able to perceive the enjoyment of their own good only, which is not the enjoyment of good but the enjoyment of evil.

DP 94. The conjunction of the Lord with man and the reciprocal conjunction of man with the Lord is effected by loving the neighbor as oneself and loving the Lord above all things. To love the neighbor as oneself consists solely in not acting insincerely or unjustly towards him, not holding him in hatred or burning with revenge against him, not reviling or defaming him, not committing adultery with his wife, and not doing other like things against him. Who cannot see that those who do such things do not love the neighbor as themselves? But those who do not do such things for the reason that they are evils against the neighbor and also sins against the Lord, act sincerely, justly, kindly, and faithfully in relation to the neighbor; and as the Lord does likewise, a reciprocal conjunction is effected.

Questions and Comments

1. How are natural, rational and spiritual freedom different from each other? Where does natural freedom come from? Where does rational freedom come from? Where does spiritual freedom come from?
2. How does what we love determine whether we are in natural, rational or spiritual freedom?
3. DP 73 states that spiritual freedom at first does not seem to be freedom. Can you relate to this idea? What is something you do now that brings happiness, but when you first started doing it, felt compelled?
4. If we are in spiritual freedom, as opposed to natural or rational freedom, how might we act differently?
5. How does thinking eternally rather than temporally help us come into spiritual freedom?
6. Long term thinking produces different rational choices than short term thinking. One way of thinking about spiritual freedom as opposed to natural freedom is that natural freedom focuses on immediate gratification, while spiritual freedom focuses on eternal happiness.

Let him who thirsts come; and he who desires, let him take the water of life freely.

Rev. 22:17

DP 75. The human mind is of three degrees.... Consequently a man can be raised up from natural knowledge into spiritual intelligence and from that into celestial wisdom; and from these two, intelligence and wisdom, he can look to the Lord, and thus be conjoined with Him, whereby he lives forever. But this exaltation in respect to affection would not be possible unless man had from rationality an ability to raise the understanding, and from liberty an ability to will this.

For this reason those that have no wish to understand anything except what pertains to the world and its nature, and no wish to understand what moral and spiritual good and truth are, cannot be raised from knowledge into intelligence, still less into wisdom. For they have closed up these capacities, and therefore make themselves to be men no further than having an ability to understand, if they will, and an ability to so will, from the rationality and liberty implanted in them. From these two faculties man is able to think, and to speak from thought. In all other things men are not men but beasts; and some, from the abuse of these faculties are worse than beasts.

DP 76. From this it may be clearly evident that, although everything that a man perceives and thence thinks and knows, and wills and does in accordance with the perception, flows into him, still it is of the Divine Providence of the Lord that it should appear to be his own; for, as has been said, man would otherwise receive nothing, and therefore could not be gifted with any understanding and wisdom. It is well known that

Remain in Me, and I in you; as the branch cannot bring [forth] fruit from itself, unless it remains in the vine, no more can you, unless you remain in Me. I am the Vine, you [are] the branches; he who remains in Me, and I in him, the same brings [forth] much fruit; for apart from Me you can do nothing.

John 15:4-5

DP 92. Anyone can see from reason alone that there is no conjunction of minds unless it is reciprocal, and that the reciprocation is what conjoins. If one loves another and is not loved in return, then as one approaches the other withdraws; but if he is loved in return, then as one approaches the other approaches, and conjunction takes place. Moreover, love wills to be loved; this is implanted in it; and so far as love is loved in return, it is in itself and in its enjoyment. This makes clear that when the Lord loves man and is not loved in return by man, the Lord approaches and man withdraws. Thus the Lord continually wills to draw near to man and to enter into him, and man turns back and goes away. This is true of those who are in hell; but with those who are in heaven there is a mutual conjunction.

Since the Lord wills conjunction with man in order to save him, He provides that there shall be in man something reciprocal. The reciprocal in man is this, that the good which he wills and does from freedom, and the truth which, from that willing, he thinks and speaks in accordance with reason, appear to be from himself, and this good in his will and this truth in his understanding appear to be his. To man they even appear to be from himself and to be his precisely as if they were his, with no difference whatever. Take notice whether any one by any sense perceives it to be otherwise.... The only difference is that man ought to acknowledge that he does good and

Questions and Comments

1. DP 84 says that "every delight is felt as good." Think about something you have recently called "good." How does our use of the word "good" to describe sensual delights such as tastes reflect what is said in DP 84?
2. How do the delights of the love of self and the love of the world that we experience in the "first state" prevent us from knowing what evils we are in?
3. How is the "first state" related to the natural freedom discussed in the Day One readings?
4. In the "second state" we begin to think about heaven and God. What motivates a person to start doing this?
5. How is the "second state" related to the rational freedom discussed in the Day One readings?
6. How do we enter into the "third state"?
7. How is the "third state" related to the spiritual freedom discussed in the Day One readings?

everything that is good and true is not man's but the Lord's, and yet that it appears to man to be his own. And because everything that is good and true so appears, even all things of the Church and of heaven, consequently all things of love and wisdom, and also of charity and faith, so appear, and yet nothing of these is man's. No one can receive them from the Lord unless it appears to him that he perceives these things as if from himself. From these considerations the truth on this matter may be evident, namely, that whatever a man does from freedom, whether it be of reason or not, provided it be according to his reason, appears to him to be his own.

DP 77. A man from his faculty called rationality is able to form conclusions regarding the goods which are useful to society in the spiritual world, and regarding the evils which are harmful there, if in place of evils he understands sins, and in place of goods, the works of charity. This also a man is able to make a matter of his reason, if he be so disposed, since he has rationality and liberty; and so far as he shuns these evils as sins, his rationality and liberty are uncovered and become apparent. They assume control of his affairs and grant him perception and power; and so far as he acts thus, he regards the good works of charity as a neighbor regards the neighbor, from mutual love.

Now because the Lord, for the sake of reception and conjunction, wills that whatever a man does freely according to reason should appear to him to be his own, and as this is in accordance with reason itself, it follows that man can will to act thus from reason, because it constitutes his eternal happiness; and that he can do so from the Divine power of the Lord when this is invoked.

Questions and Comments

1. DP 75 indicates that man can be worse than beasts if we abuse the faculties of freedom and rationality. What do you think this means? Can you think of an example in which a person is worse than a beast?
2. What would happen if we were not able to feel as though our thoughts and perceptions were our own?
3. How are knowledge, intelligence and wisdom different from one another and how do the faculties of freedom and rationality help us move from knowledge to intelligence to wisdom?
4. DP 77 says that we can use our rationality to understand how evils are harmful to society if we can recognize an evil to be a sin. Are there any evils in society today that do not appear to be recognized as sins by the popular culture? If so, do you see a connection between natural freedom (see Day One) and the failure to recognize an evil as a sin?
5. How are freedom and happiness linked? Often times it may seem that freedom causes lots of misery.

account of the joy there; and thus concerning God from whom the joy of heaven comes to him. At first such thoughts spring from the delight of self-love; for to him this delight is heavenly joy. But as long as the delight of this love reigns, together with the delight of the evils flowing from it, he cannot but understand that to go to heaven is to pour out prayers, listen to preachings, take part in the Holy Supper, give to the poor, help the needy, spend money on churches, make contributions to hospitals, and so on. A man in this state has no other idea than that he is saved merely by thinking about those things which religion teaches, whether it be about what is called faith, or about what is called faith and charity. He has no other idea than that he is saved merely by having those thoughts, because he gives no heed to the evils in which he takes delight; and as long as their delight remains, the evils also remain.

Man's *third state*, which is a state of regeneration, follows upon and is a continuation of the former state. It begins when man desists from evils as sins, and it progresses as he shuns them, and it is perfected as he fights against them; and then, as he from the Lord conquers them, he is regenerated.

DP 88. Everyone who has any thought from interior understanding can see that the power to will and to understand is not from man, but is from Him who has Power itself, that is, Power in its essence. Only consider, what is the source of power? Is it not from Him who has it in its very potency, that is, who has it in Himself and thus from Himself? Power in itself, therefore, is Divine. Every power must have an opportunity which has to be given to it, and thus there must be an act of determination from an agency more internal or higher than itself.

Jesus answered and said to him, Amen, amen, I say to thee, unless someone is born from above he cannot see the kingdom of God.... Marvel not that I said to thee, you must be born from above. John 3:3, 7

DP 83. The reason why no one can come into the kingdom of God unless he has been born again is, that man by inheritance from his parents is born into evils of every kind, with the faculty of becoming spiritual by the removal of these evils; and unless he becomes spiritual he cannot come into heaven. From being natural to become spiritual is to be born again or regenerated. But in order that it may be known how man is regenerated these three things must be considered: the nature of his first state, which is a state of condemnation; the nature of his second state, which is a state of reformation; and the nature of his third state, which is a state of regeneration.

Man's *first state*, which is a state of condemnation, everyone has by inheritance from his parents; for man is thereby born into the love of self and the love of the world, and from these as wellsprings, into evils of every kind. He is led by the delights of these loves, and these delights prevent him from knowing that he is in evils, for every delight of love is felt as good. Therefore, unless a man is regenerated, he knows no other than that to love himself and the world above all things is goodness itself; and that to rule over all, and to possess the wealth of all others, is the highest good.

Man's *second state*, which is a state of reformation, is that in which he begins to think about heaven on

And calling the crowd, He said to them, Hear and understand. Not that which enters into the mouth defiles the man, but that which comes out of the mouth, this defiles the man.... Those things which proceed out from the mouth, come forth from the heart, and they defile the man. Matthew 15:10-11, 18

DP 79. What a man does from freedom according to his thought is also said to remain with him, since nothing that a man has appropriated to himself can be eradicated; for it has come to be of his love and at the same time of his reason, that is, of his will and at the same time of his understanding, and consequently of his life. This can be removed indeed, but still it cannot be expelled; and when it is removed it is transferred as it were from the center to the circumference, and there it stays. This is what is meant by its remaining.

For instance, if a man in his boyhood and youth has appropriated to himself a certain evil by doing it from the delight of his love, such as fraud, blasphemy, revenge or adultery; and if he has committed those evils from freedom according to thought, he has indeed appropriated them to himself. But if he afterwards repents, shuns them and regards them as sins that are to be abhorred, and so from freedom according to reason desists from them, then there are appropriated to him the good principles to which those evils are opposed. These good principles then constitute the center, and they remove the evils towards the circumference further and further as he abhors and turns away from them. Still, however, they cannot be so expelled that they can be said to be extirpated, although by their removal they may appear to be extirpated. This results from man being withheld from evil and being held in good by the Lord.

DP 80. Nothing that a man merely thinks, nor even that which he thinks to will, is appropriated to him, unless at the same time he so far wills it as to do it if opportunity offers. This is because when man so does anything he does it from the will through the understanding, or from the affection of the will through the thought of the understanding; but so long as it is a matter of thought alone it cannot be appropriated, because the understanding does not then conjoin itself with the will.

DP 81. The evils which a man believes to be allowable, even though he does not commit them, are also appropriated to him; since whatever is allowable in the thought comes from the will, for then there is consent. When, therefore, a man believes any evil to be allowable, he loosens an internal restraint upon it, and he is withheld from doing it only by external restraints, such as fears; and because his spirit favors that evil, when external restraints are removed he does it as allowable; and meanwhile, he continually does it in his spirit.

Questions and Comments

1. How do we appropriate good or evil to ourselves? What role does freedom and rationality play in this process?
2. Once we have appropriated evil to ourselves, how do we remove it?
3. DP 80 and 81 indicate that we can appropriate evil to ourselves just by willing it even if we never have the opportunity to actually commit the evil. It is useful to think about what kinds of things we might do if no one was looking in order to figure out what evils we need to work on that might be harder to identify.
4. If we think something is okay for someone else to do, but not ourselves, is that the same as believing it to be allowable as discussed in DP 81?
5. All sorts of thoughts come through our heads that we do not deem allowable in our will. As DP 80 says, "As long as it is a matter of thought alone it cannot be appropriated."