



Starting Science From God

3: Explaining Theism

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A series of four evenings

Titles:

- Feb 5: Connecting Science and Theism (chs 1, 3)
- Feb 12: Discrete Degrees (chs. 4, 5)
- **Feb 19: Explaining Theism (Part III)**
- Feb 26: Applications to Theistic Science (Part V)



- I talk for 45 mins (answering shorter questions).
 - This is being video-taped. Not too much noise please.
- Refreshment break for 15 mins
- Discussion for 45 mins (for longer questions)

3. Explaining Theism

Topics for today:

- Principles of Theism
- Argument from Being
- Argument from Life Itself
- We are images of God in every part
- Levels, sub-levels and sub-sub-levels
- Questions of correspondences, personal identity, law vs intervention, etc.

Where to begin Theism?

Living theism:

- God is that Person who
 - is a necessary being,
 - is unselfish Love itself,
 - is Wisdom itself,
 - so: Life itself.
- God enlivens our world.

Essential Theistic Principles

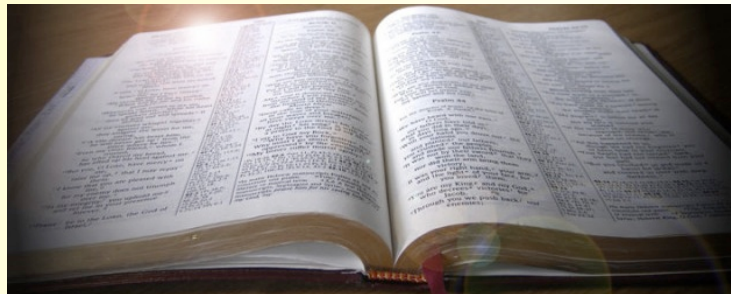
0. God exists, and God is One
1. God is love which is unselfish and cannot love only itself.
2. God is wisdom as well as love and thereby also power and action.
3. God is life itself: the source of all dispositions to will, think and act.
4. Everything in the world is a kind of image of God: all minds and also natural objects of all kinds.
5. Our life from God derives from divine power, depending on us.

This set was suggested first by Emanuel Swedenborg in his book
“Divine Love and Wisdom” (1763)



Religious Support for Postulates

1. Love: “God is Love” 1 John 4:8
2. Wisdom: “the Lord gives wisdom, and from his mouth come knowledge and understanding”
Proverbs 2:6
3. Life: “the Father has life in himself” John 5:26
4. Image of God: “God created man in his own image” Genesis 1:27
5. Our life is from God: “The free gift of God is eternal life” Romans 6:23



Our existence depends on God

1. God is being itself
 2. We exist
 3. We (as individuals) have being.
- Therefore, our being
either is God,
or depends on God.

God is Not Us

1. God is love which is unselfish
2. Unselfish loves cannot love itself.
 - Therefore, we must be distinct from God.
 - That is:
 - We are separate from God in some way:
 - God is not us.
 - So: not 'pantheism'
 - when everything is a part of God

God cannot create another god

- Suppose God did create something that lived in itself.
 - Then that thing would have as one of its attributes life itself.
 - So that thing would have as one of its attributes God.
 - Then, since God is one, we should conclude:
 - That thing would not be distinct from God.
- We do exist distinct from God (as loved unselfishly)
 - So God cannot create beings who live in themselves
 - ‘Little gods’ cannot be created.



Life and Life Itself

- The 'life of an object' is the most original generative disposition that gives rise to its capacities and actions.
- God is Life Itself
 - The original source of all powers, capacities and dispositions of objects and persons.



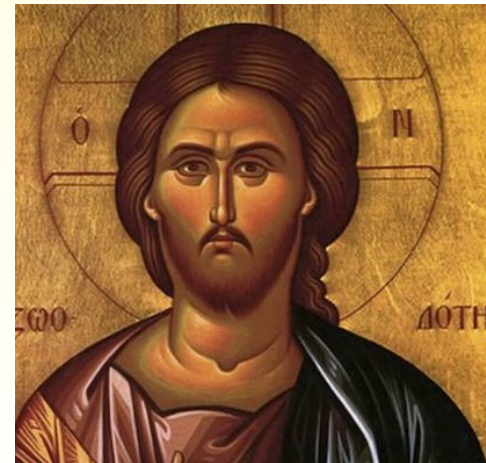
How do we live?

- Our being and life depends on God. How?
- **Our actions are our own**
- The life we have is derived from God in accordance with what we have already done.
- ✧ So we can choose when to act
- ✧ And we enjoy our actions
- Our actions are occasional cause
- God's life is the principal cause.



God is Love, Wisdom and Action

1. God is love which is unselfish and cannot love only itself.
 2. God is wisdom as well as love
 3. God is thereby also power and action.
- This is a trinity within God, as one person:
 1. Love is the substance
 2. Wisdom is the form
 3. Action is the resulting act



Images of God

- All the world, and each of its parts, is a kind of image of God
 - We are images to greater or lesser extents, depending on our nature and actions.
 - What is unified and continuous in God, is imaged as discrete distributions
 - There are in us images from God of Love, Wisdom and Action.



We receive and re-use life

- We choose when to act (freedom!)
 - so we enjoy our actions
- This requires us to receive, retain, reuse life
- This requires ‘separate containers’ for love, and wisdom and means to action.
- These are then combined when we choose.

Name: reception = ‘influx’



Three kinds of reception

- 1. *Spiritual***, to contain the separate loves in creation, including desires, loves, affections, motivations, purposes, dispositions, etc.
- 2. *Mental***, to contain the separate carriers of wisdom, including thoughts, ideas, understandings, rationality, plans, ideologies, beliefs, etc.
- 3. *Physical***, to deal with separate final actions & effects, including the entire sets of things we know from external observations and physics.

The spiritual and mental, together, are often call 'mind'.

Relations between 3 receptions

- God, with the three created receptions, gives a set of four generative levels.
 - God ↘ Spiritual ↘ Mental ↘ Physical
- 1. **God** generates first the spiritual realm, where there are containing-substances which appropriate and retain love.
- 2. **Spiritual** (of loves) acts by producing new thoughts in the mental realm, where there are containing-substances which appropriate and retain ideas.
- 3. **Mental** (of ideas) acts, in conjunction with the loves from the spiritual, by producing new effects in the final physical realm
- 4. **Physical** (of actions) is the final effect of the chain and is the 'bottom line' or termination of all the processes.

Relations between 3 receptions

- Lower levels select what can occur:
 - God ↘ Spiritual ↘ Mental ↘ Physical
- 1. Particular existing **spiritual** containing-substances select which loves from God *can* be appropriated and retained
- 2. Particular existing **mental** containing-substances select which ideas generated by the spiritual realm *can* be appropriated and retained.
- 3. Particular existing **physical** containing-substances select which actions generated by spiritual and mental realms *can* have permanent physical effects.

God is Equally Present in All Subparts

- God is the same everywhere, at all scales in space and at all degrees and stages of generation.
- Same pattern of love/wisdom/effects can be applied at each of the these 3 created generative levels
- This produces sub-levels.
- Three levels give nine sub-levels (an ennead)



Ennead of sub-levels: form

1: Spiritual degree love in the spirit	2: Mental degree thoughts in mind	3: Physical degree actions in the body
Love of loving: 1.1	Thoughts of loves: 2.1	Effects from ends: 3.1
Love of thoughts: 1.2	Thoughts of thoughts: 2.2	Effects from thoughts: 3.2
Love of actions: 1.3	Thoughts of actions: 2.3	Effects from actions: 3.3

- Each of these nine sub-degrees describes substances of its own kind which act in distinct spaces.
- Within those spaces there can be contact between two objects of the same kind.
- These nine substances exist simultaneously and interpenetrate without collision. Note that ‘interpenetrate without collision’ is only a metaphor for the relation of the nine spaces.

Ennead of sub-levels: content

Spiritual	Mental	Physical
1: Spiritual degree love in the spirit	2: Mental degree thoughts in mind	3: Physical degree actions in the body
Love of loving: 1.1 Celestial heaven	Thoughts of loves: 2.1 Interior rational	Effects from ends: 3.1 Pregeometric physics
Love of thoughts: 1.2 Spiritual heaven	Thoughts of thoughts: 2.2 Scientific rational	Effects from thoughts: 3.2 Virtual physical processes
Love of actions: 1.3 Spiritual-natural heaven	Thoughts of actions: 2.3 Exterior mind	Effects from actions: 3.3 Actual physical processes

The **bold descriptions** are the *identification* of these sub-levels using

1. Swedenborg (1 and 2.1)
2. developmental psychology (2.3 and 2.3)
3. Physics (3.3, 3.2, and extrapolating to 3.1)

The 3.3 physical sub-level is already known to have 3 sub-sub-levels (last week)

Sub-sub-sub-levels in the Physical

Spiritual world: love 1.	Mental world: thought 2.	physical world: effects 3.		
Love of loves: 1.1	Higher Rational: 2.1	Reception: effects of love : 3.1		
		(reception of love): 3.11	(reception of thought): 3.12	(reception of decisions): 3.13
Love of thoughts: 1.2	Scientific Rational: 2.2	Scientific Laws: effects of thoughts: 3.2		
		Variational Principles: 3.21	Field Laws: 3.22	Virtual Events: 3.23
Love of actions: 1.3	External mind: 2.3	Material effects: effects of effects: 3.3		
		Energy: 3.31	Wave Functions: 3.32	Actual Selections: 3.33

3.1: Pregeometric processes of quantum gravity (still speculative)

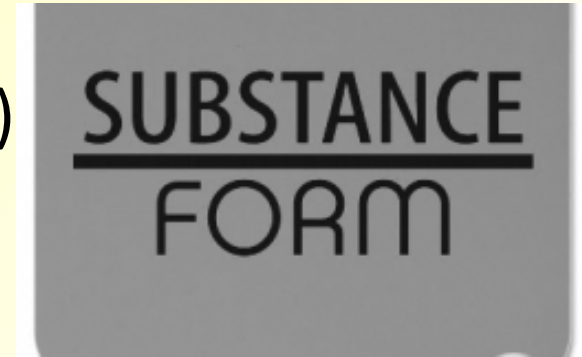
3.2: Virtual processes of quantum field theory

3.3: Actual processes of ordinary quantum mechanics

There are also sub-sub-sub-levels known in the mental (see next week)

Dynamic Existences

- Everything has substance and form (physical, mental, spiritual, even God)
 - ‘No process without structure, no structure without substance, no substance without power, no power without process’
- Time is ‘normal’, not strange just for spirituality:
 - Past is definite
 - Future is not yet existing (only as form, maybe)
 - Present is the conscious point of becoming
 - Maybe God can know forms for future things, but not their substance. Future substances do not exist.



Correspondences

- Detailed events in both of each pair of degrees.
- Successive generative influxes (from prior degree) reciprocating with sequential selections
- This alternation will repeat itself longest if the *patterns* of the constituent events are most similar in the two degrees
 - As then they do not get out of step.
- This gives rise to *correspondences of function* between adjacent degrees.
 - by a sort of survival of the fittest
- This is a causal explanation of correspondences.
 - Swedenborg talks a lot about these.

Personal Identity

- Love is the substance of a person
- Cannot change a person without changing their loves.
- Cannot changes loves, and keep the same person, without some acceptance by old loves
- The deepest love can be unchanging
 - This may be used to permanently identify persons
 - Swedenborg's 'inmost degree' not normally seen?



Law and Divine Intervention

- Physical laws describe behavior of physical degrees, if no influx from spiritual or mental
 - If only physical laws, matter is ‘causally closed’
- But not here: **Need influx into matter!**
 - to sustain physical processes
 - to select and contain mental & spiritual processes
 - This not ‘intervention’ but intended causal influx!
- Note how sustained mental and spiritual processes depend on physical selections.
 - The physical is the needed ‘bottom line’ for creation.

Preview of Fourth Talk (Feb 26)

- Apply ideas and theory developed so far
 - Mental development (cognitive and affective)
 - Spiritual growth and religion
 - Mind-body connections
 - Starting the universe
 - Correspondences
 - Evolution
 - etc
 - any suggestions?

End