

Bringing God Into Religion-Science Discourse: Six Rational Conclusions Derived From the Premise that God Exists

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Full Title

Bringing God into religion-science discourse: Six rational conclusions derived from the premise that God exists

Short Title

Bringing God Into Science

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Abstract

This article is a partial step towards creating a connecting language or discourse that can promote a unified science-religion discussion on God. The approach is to describe some rational concepts about God that can be logically derived from the premise that God exists. The intent is to explore what might be some of the implications for religion-science discourse if one were to accept God's reality *as a premise*. Six rational conclusions are presented and derived from the premise that an omnipotent God exists, namely: (1) God is a Person, at once Divine and Human. (2) God's omnipotence controls every event. (3) God is perfect in love and the rational explanation for the existence of evil. (4) There are two worlds, one physical in time, and the other spiritual in eternity. (5) Humans are born dual citizens, in time and in eternity. (6) The eternity of the afterlife is our mental world now. (7) We are born with heaven and hell in our mind. The six

conclusions together make up a preliminary general theory of God's omnipotent control of all details in the universe.

Keywords: God; theistic; Swedenborg; scientific method; afterlife; dualism

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Bringing God Into Religion-Science Discourse: Six Rational Conclusions Derived From the Premise that God Exists

Abstract

Up to 250 words

The purpose of the article is to describe some rational concepts about God that can be logically derived from the assumption that God exists. The intent is to explore some of the implications for scientific and academic discourse if one were to accept God's reality *as a premise*. Six rational conclusions are presented and derived from the premise that an omnipotent God exists, namely: (1) God is a Person, at once Divine and Human. (2) God's omnipotence controls every event. (3) God is perfect in love and the rational explanation for the existence of evil. (4) There are two worlds, one physical in time, and the other spiritual in eternity. (5) Humans are born dual citizens, in time and in eternity. (6) The eternity of the afterlife is our mental world now. (7) We are born with heaven and hell in our mind. The six conclusions together make up a preliminary general theory of God's omnipotent control of all details in the universe.

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Introduction

The Negative vs. Positive Bias in Science

A recent poll of the illustrious members of the National Academy of Science indicates that one in three scientists (33 percent) believe that God exists and additionally 18 percent believe in the existence of a higher power (Pew 2009). Thus, the bare majority of NAS members (51 percent) believe in God or some higher power, while the minority (49 percent) does not believe in God or a higher power. Despite this nearly balanced attitude among practicing scientists, there is no entry point for God in science. Despite their view of God as real, half of American scientists are required by science protocol to act as if God is not real when engaged in scientific work and creating explanations of the universe and how it works.

The mandatory exclusion of God in scientific explanations has been in force since the beginning of modern methodological empiricism in the seventeenth century with the writings of Descartes, Bacon, Hobbes, Locke, Newton and others (Heilbron 2003). All the major writers in modern science history appear to have refrained from introducing God or supernatural reality as an explanatory concept.

As a result, many science conscious people refer to their relationship to God as “faith” and they are enjoined to separate this faith from their science as if these two had nothing in common in their mind. But how could such a forced separation be justified rationally and morally? If God exists then God is omnipotent and omnipresent. Is it rational for scientists to think that all the natural order and laws that we see in the physical universe operate on their own, knowing that God is real and omnipotent? Is a materialist world of nature without God a rational idea, or irrational? Can randomness or chance exist in a world whose every detail is managed by God? If God is omnipotent is it rational to say that some phenomena can be explained without invoking God?

What meaning can omnipotence have if God is not the sole active power in all these events, from the smallest to the largest? The God-exists scientists must feel internally repressed when the ethics of their profession requires the total removal of God from their research and writing. This is the required attitude and standard in science today that has been strictly enforced for the past four centuries. This materialistic or physicalistic ethics and standard has been called *the negative bias in science* (James 2004).

It is a bias because science does not search for a proof of God’s existence, but simply banishes the idea from anywhere in what society calls “legitimate” science. In other words, whatever proofs anyone may wish to offer of God’s existence is actually kept irrelevant in science. God is not a topic or event being researched anywhere in negative bias science. Materialistic science is structured from its very foundation with the careful exclusion of God as an explanatory concept in theory and research. Proposals on God are

automatically excluded without a hearing from the standard scientific community consisting of conferences, work relationships, professional reputations, access to research funds, job opportunities, journal publications, or college textbooks. This systematic exclusion of God from science is from premise or unproven assumption, and is rightly called a negative bias.

In contrast, scientists who have the opposite bias adopt the premise that God exists and does not need to be proven. This contrastive scientific attitude may be called *the positive bias in science*, as for example presented by contemporary scientists in the newly revived methodology of “theistic science” (Thompson 2011, 2002; Baker 2005; James 2008, 1998; Bryntesson 2009; Sylvia 2010).

Starting with the positive bias in science that “God exists” *as an unproven premise*, what kind of rational propositions follow logically from this one assumption? The following is an analysis that derives six rational conclusions from the premise that God exists. This premise is meant to reflect the commonly held view of God as is found in most dictionaries. For example, the *American Heritage Dictionary* defines God as “*A being conceived as the perfect, omnipotent, omniscient originator and ruler of the universe, the principal object of faith and worship in monotheistic religions.*”

What follows assumes this ordinary non-technical definition of God. This presentation is not intended to contribute to the long-standing debate between God and atheism. That debate need not be considered or resolved here because the assertion that God exists is taken as a premise without requiring proof. The intent is to explore the logical consequences for science if one accepts God’s reality as a premise. Seven rational consequences are here suggested and examined. If the premise that God exists is true and real then there are consequences for how scientists can think and reason about the observations and measurements they make. The scientific method can legitimately incorporate rational ideas that are logically derived from a premise that is presumed to be true and real.

The purpose of what follows is to describe some rational concepts about God that are logically derived from God’s infinite existence and His Divine properties or powers. Rational concepts about God are legitimate and usable in scientific reasoning when two criteria are met. First, the theistic concepts must contribute to cause-effect explanations that connect God to a specific observation or measurement, thus to the quantitative and qualitative characteristics of things. Second, in order for such theistic concepts to be practically viable in science the cause-effect explanations in one case or area must be seen to apply in other cases and areas. This is possible only if a unified explanatory theory is constructed out of all the cases and areas. The six conclusions here presented make up a unified but preliminary general theory of how God creates a downward series of atmospheres that are locked together in cause-effect series. God’s omnipotent control of all details in the universe is thus made understandable in a scientific context.

First Conclusion:
God is a Person, at once Divine and Human

The characteristics attributed to God such as being perfectly loving, good, wise, or merciful indicate that God is being treated as a living Person, not an impersonal energy or entity like “nature” or “the depth of the universe”. It is rational to worship and pray to a living Person who is the Supreme Being, omniscient and omnipresent. But it is not rational to pray to nature or to the universe. Because God is a living Person, God can be loving and wise, or good and merciful. These are *human* traits and therefore God is treated as both Divine and Human, or in other words, as the Divine Human. It makes rational sense to pray or to have a relationship with a Divine Human Person who is omnipresent, good, loving and wise to perfection.

Implications:

The concept of God as Person is independent of the debate whether prayer is efficacious or imagined, a question that will not be considered here. If one grants that God is omnipotent and omniscient then it logically follows that praying or worshipping God is a rational thing to do. Praying and talking to God are real communicative acts just like talking on the phone to a friend. In contrast praying or talking to an inert object like a statue or the physical universe is not an actual communicative exchange. Additional implications will be introduced as the remaining conclusions are treated of.

Second Conclusion:
God's Omnipotence Must Control Every Event

The word omnipotent refers to all power, consequently having *no exception* no matter how large or small. One may try to think of something that does not involve power, but in vain. The motion of an atomic particle or a planet requires power. To read this sentence requires physical power to move the eyes, mental power to select thoughts and to sequence them into a coherent order, and motivational power to want to finish reading the sentence and to figure out its meaning. Clearly, God being omnipotent must be a controlling element in an individual's power to comprehend any sentence or power to look around and assess a situation. Everything that is done, thought of, intended, or felt is controlled or managed by God's omnipotence. What else can omnipotence logically mean? If a single thing would not be under God's control then God's omnipotence would no longer exist or be total.

It is common to think that God created the universe and provided it with its own source of power and life. For instance, one might think that once God had created electro-magnetic forces into a certain physical order, other phenomena would then stem from this built in physical energy and order, thus not directly from God but from nature as it were. However it is not rational to think that gravity or solar flares can be nature's own source of power because if this were so, then God would no longer be omnipotent as there would be events that are controlled by something other than God. Logic requires us to say that

God's omnipotent power *cannot be given away* to nature or to people because once this is done, God is no longer omnipotent. To say that God is omnipotent necessarily means that none of God's power can be given away, no matter how tiny. If God "gave away" even the tiniest power, God would no longer be omnipotent.

Implications

The concept of "theism" in its classical sense acknowledges one omnipotent God who is directly "active" in the events of the universe (Mackie & MacKie 1990). Theism rejects the idea in "deism" which is that God created nature and its laws but then no longer participates directly in the details of the events in the universe (Swinburne 1993). Theism is sometimes discussed as "exclusive monotheism" (Bauckham 1999; Thompson 1999, 2011). Physicist Thompson has elaborated details about how theism can be incorporated in current developments in physics and other fields:

A model is presented to show how the existence of physical law could be a reasonable consequence of Divine Immanence in the world of natural phenomena. Divine Immanence is seen as the continual production of the principal causes or dispositions which enable created things to act and change. It is argued that this model is physically consistent, philosophically coherent, and theologically sound.

This paper will discuss the question of whether God may be said to sustain the world, and, if so, how this may be accomplished in a manner consistent with physical observations. ... To see how theism may be a coherent belief, it is necessary to give some rational account of how God may be both transcendent of and immanent in the world. (Thompson 1993).

The idea of omnipotence can be a viable scientific concept if it subsumes omniscience and omnipresence since without these two the idea of omnipotence by itself has no rational basis in operation. To be omnipotent God must be everywhere and must know all things past, present, and future. Professor Thompson's work shows that the idea of God's omnipresence or immanence in the natural world can be so defined as to have a scientific meaning in physics and consequently all of science. God's eternity outside time and physical space is often referred to as transcendence. Dr. Thompson's theistic science proposal shows that the dualist idea of "outside time and apart from space" (Swedenborg 1763 [DLW]) can also be a scientific concept that integrates logically with God's transcendence and immanence.

The idea of God's transcendence leads to the concept of dualism in science, which is the acknowledgment of the existence of dual worlds, one in time and one outside time. This concept will be expanded in the presentation of the Fourth Conclusion below.

Third Conclusion: God is Perfect in Love and Rationality

The Problem of the Existence of Evil

Having the traits of omnipotence, omniscience, omnipresence, and perfection in goodness, loving-kindness and mercy, means that the Divine Human is perfectly and exclusively loving and wise (or rational). There cannot be an exception, not even one, for then God would not be perfectly loving. Neither can there be a mistake because then God would not be perfectly wise and omniscient.

It is common to think that God may be perfect but does not have total control over what happens in the world because He gives people freedom to decide what to do or what to think. To be a permanent trait of being human, this mental freedom must be continually maintained by God as part of what it means to be a human. However this freedom in which God maintains every human being cannot be used as an explanation for why it appears that the world is less than perfect with the occurrence of wars, sickness and social ills. In other words, human freedom seemingly introduces the lack of God's perfect control over all events, making events unpredictable and uncontrollable. This has been known as the "Agustinian theodicy" first formulated by Augustine of Hippo (354–430), also known as Saint Augustine.

As well, people who have no rational justification for the existence of evil are sometimes led to reject the idea of God's omnipotence, and hence of God. Another version is the idea that God could have prevented the evil but chose not to, and consequently God is not perfectly good and loving, discussed in popular literature as dystheism (Google Search 2014). The system of Christian religion known as "process theology" also removes omnipotence from God in order that evil may not be attributed to God (Cobb & Griffin 1976).

According to Hick (2010 [1977]) evil and suffering are tolerated by God for a good purpose, which is to bring knowledge of evil's presence in one's personality. This can only be done when faith is not compelled and complete freedom of thinking is given. Even though it may appear that evil wins the truth is that God succeeds in His purpose in the afterlife.

In order to maintain scientific viability, a rational explanation must be found that retains the earlier concept of omnipotence whereby God must necessarily control everything without exception, and *including therefore people's decisions they make in freedom*. Only in this way can it be maintained that God is omnipotent and immanent.

Hence, we need to construct a rational explanation for the fact that people make bad decisions, are selfish, deceitful, and cruel to each other even though God fully controls each of these things in every individual, as is required by the idea of omnipotence.

If we accept that God is omnipotent, perfectly loving and wise, we can conclude logically that God must have a rational and perfectly good reason for allowing people to make bad

decisions and to be cruel and destructive to one another. Given omnipotence why then does God allow evil in the world if God has the power to prevent evil from even occurring? This question has been tackled by many writers in centuries of literature, perhaps unsuccessfully, and is still considered to be a deep mystery today, on the notion that mere human intelligence cannot understand Divine wisdom and its operation (Leibniz 2000 [1710]). However a rational solution may exist but has not yet been seen by most.

Not only can God prevent all evil from occurring, but is also the power behind each step or detail involved in an evil event or catastrophe. Consider for example a drunk driver who kills a mother and her baby in a head on crash. Logic tells us that since God is omnipotent it was God's power that allowed the driver to lift his hand and ingest alcohol to excess, then it was God's power that gave the two cars energy to collide, and it was the power of God that took the life of the mother and the baby. Every molecular detail of the drinking, driving, crashing, and dying was controlled by God, including the thought processes and decisions of the drunk driver and the mother.

Since the Divine Human is perfect in loving and in wisdom it is rational to conclude that every feature of an event contributes to the goal, which is good and wise, or else God could not possibly allow it to come into existence. This rationale applies to every part of the event and there cannot logically be an exception due to lack of total Divine control. In the current example it includes the amount of drinking people do, the production of alcohol, the construction of bars, the moving of cars, mothers driving their babies, drivers making hundreds of decisions, cars functioning in all their parts, or malfunctioning. All is included in God's omnipotence, love, and wisdom or rationality.

The above argument sounds logical in theory, but it may not yet be psychologically satisfying – not until we can explain rationally how these injurious details are indeed good, namely, an innocent mother and baby being killed, the alcohol industry and its marketing, dangerous cars, people making selfish and cruel decisions, etc. We must be able to explain these details rationally, as the actions of a perfectly loving and omnipotent God.

With regard to the explanation of this issue Swedenborg (1764 [DP]) proposes a distinction between “*that which God wills and intends*” – which he attributes to the Laws of Divine Providence, and “*that which God allows but does not will and intend*” – which he attributes to the Laws of Divine Permissions. Everything of Divine Providence is from God and is perfect in goodness and truth, while everything of Divine Permissions is from selfish and foolish human beings, who are not good nor loving, and not true or nor rational.

The Laws of Permissions allow the occurrence of some evil but not of others. *Only those evil events are permitted to come into existence that function as intermediate steps to good outcomes.* By allowing certain evil deeds and events (but not others) God is

facilitating the process of self-knowledge to those who commit those evils against others and society, which means most people, given that most people are selfish and dishonest some of the time. Without allowing some particular evil deeds and intentions to come out selectively, there would be no perception and knowledge of them as being in one's personality. There would then be no opportunity for reformation and change of heart and direction in one's life for anyone in the human race. Inability to reform would have extremely bad consequences for the individual in the afterlife and for society in this life. It is necessary to consider not only the consequences in this world but also those in the afterlife where everyone's fate continues upon death. More of these spiritual consequences will be explored below

Swedenborg's solution retains the theistic approach of God's omnipotence in all details and at the same time shows that God is not the source of what is not good and not true. God's omnipotence maintains every individual's ability in every situation to think and act according to one's own will or self. This is the source of all that is evil and false. God allows it and is the power behind it (omnipotence) but is not the originator of it (human freedom) (Swedenborg 1764 [DP]).

Implications

The solution to the problem of why bad things happen to innocent people can become satisfying psychologically as well as rationally when it is seen that the end of the story is not the death of someone but continues in the afterlife. As for instance in the story of the mother and child in the car crash. There is no emotional resolution as to why God allowed this particular evil event to occur involving this particular mother and her child. It may even be seen as an injustice or as a lack of Divine power. It is necessary therefore to go beyond the dying event and to consider the existence of the afterlife. What happened to mother and child after the fatal crash? *This idea must be considered in order to resolve the issue of an omnipotent God who is perfect in good and truth but seems to allow evil.* Hick (1977) seems to have realized this, as pointed out just above.

Suppose for instance (as witnessed by Swedenborg 1758 [HH]) that immediately after death mother and child are resuscitated in the afterlife, as would happen with every human being at death. Suppose that they now continue their relationship, their love, their growth, and their life in a heavenly environment where they may be joined by other loved ones who have died earlier or have come later. Such a mental environment is benign, protected, happy, and social in company with others who are also in the afterlife and share compatible loves and beliefs. By introducing the continuation of the event following the crash and the dying, we can gain a more objective and balanced view of it and why God may have allowed the painful event to occur to mother and innocent child.

Furthermore, consider the negligent drunk driver. He won't be getting away with anything he did. Besides doing jail time and related life complications in this world, he will also be facing the consequences of his negligent and uncaring behavior and attitude when he is

resuscitated in the afterlife. While for mother and child life continues on course, the bad driver will be struggling for his life situation in eternity. When viewed in this rational light one can better understand why God's goodness and omnipotence allowed the event to occur.

The afterlife approach to the solution of why God allows evils to occur requires bringing into consideration some of the remaining conclusions to be presented below.

***Fourth Conclusion:
There Are Two Worlds, One Physical in Time,
The Other Spiritual in Eternity***

God the omnipotent Divine Human with perfect love and wisdom is the creator and manager or sustainer of the universe. It seems illogical to think that God can accomplish the creation and management of the world while being *in* the world or in any part of it. In order to create space, time, energy, and matter it is logically necessary that when creating God be outside what is created. God could not create the physical universe while being part of the physical universe. It is rational therefore to conclude that there are two types of existence, or two types of worlds, one that is outside time or in eternity, and the other that is in time and physical space. This rational principle is known in the positive bias science as *dualism* (Descartes 1637; Williams-Hogan 2012; Thompson 2004; James 2008).

The premise that God is infinite logically requires that God has always existed having no beginning, a fact that is true only of God. Logically there can be only one infinite. If there were two things that are said to be infinite then neither would be infinite. This conclusion is rational because if God had not always existed, then how did God get into existence? *So if we think that God exists then logic requires that we also think that God has always existed.*

Since God is prior to creation and has always existed His type of existence may be called "*from eternity to eternity*" (Swedenborg 1749 [AC]) which refers to God's infinity of existence as having no beginning and no end. This permanent existence or "*Esse*" in Latin is *prior* to the creation of the two worlds, which therefore have a beginning and are finite. The Divine state of permanent existence, or "Being Itself", has no beginning or ending and must logically be associated solely with God who is the only infinite. The idea of "two infinities" is a logical impossibility. It is from this state of ceaseless and infinite existence that God created the two worlds, one world in time and physical space, and the other world apart from time and physical space. The two worlds, one physical or natural, the other spiritual or mental, are both finite since they have a beginning, and all things in them are therefore finited. Time is finite because it was created with the physical world and has a beginning. God could not create something that is not finite since only God is infinite. God cannot create another God since infinity cannot create another infinity.

Since God created the world and also manages all its elements, it is logically necessary to hold that God Himself was neither in time nor place when creating the natural world. God

could not create the physical world while being in the physical world. Logic requires that God was not in time and was apart from physical space when creating the physical world. Similarly, God could not sustain or manage every detail of the physical world if He were in the physical world. Hence logic requires the transcendence and immanence of an omnipotent God.

Within the framework of theistic science (Swedenborg 1749; Thompson 2011; Sylvia 2010; James 2004) dualism is the premise that God created and maintains two worlds, a natural world of material substances in time-space and a spiritual world of spiritual substances apart from matter and time-space. The world that is outside time in eternity is known in religious history, literature, and popular belief as the *spiritual world of eternity associated with the afterlife of heaven and hell*. Today, Google's Web search for "life after death" delivers ten million results and Amazon.com lists 85,000 books by that title or topic.

The concept of a spiritual world that is apart from physical time-space is not only scientifically legitimate but also logically necessary to rationally explain the details of how God manages all events through Divine laws, through built-in or created regularities, and through cause-effect series that begin with God as the initiating First Cause and extend downward and outward into the dual universe by means of cause-effect operations that are discoverable in science. This theistic science approach has its own momentum for theoretical development and expansion given that the dual universe must be conceived as unified into one determinative system where not a single detail of any kind can exist or act independently. Everything is connected to everything else by means of the Laws of Divine Providence and Permissions.

Close Relation Between Spiritual and Mental

The idea of the spiritual world apart from time becomes comprehensible as soon as we realize that "spiritual" and "mental" are closely related concepts. The *spiritual world of the afterlife in eternity* overlaps completely with our intimate experience of the *mental world since birth*. Every human being is born and exists in the mental world. This becomes obvious when you consider that all human sensations, thoughts, and feelings exist in the mental world only. *No mental object or event can exist anywhere in the physical world, the physical body, or the brain*. This is because in the perspective of substantive dualism, our sensations, thoughts, and feelings are organic structural objects in the mental world, and are constructed out of the substances of the spiritual sun in the spiritual world (see below). The substances of the spiritual sun are spiritual heat and spiritual light streaming into and filling all the atmospheres and levels of the spiritual-mental world. These substances are from God and are Divine Human. *They are uncreate, eternal and living mental substances and are named Divine love and Divine wisdom* (Swedenborg 1763 [DLW]). This aspect of Swedenborg's substantive dualism is

one of the most remarkable features of his innovative system, some details of which follow below.

The Divine mental substance of spiritual heat (which is love) and spiritual light (which is truth) fill the mental atmospheres of the human race and are captured and continuously received by the spiritual body of every individual. The affective-circulatory system of the spiritual body functions as the *mind's will* (or intentionality) and is so structured anatomically that it can receive the continuous inflow of spiritual heat (James 2008). Similarly, the cognitive-respiratory system of the spiritual body functions as the *mind's understanding* and is so structured anatomically that it can receive the continuous inflow of spiritual light. This account establishes that the mind is organic and has a substantive mental anatomy made of organs structured to receive the ceaseless and continuous inflow of spiritual love and wisdom. In other words, the power to act and to think intelligently does not belong to people but is given by instant and continuous inflow from God through the spiritual sun. Every person receives this inflow in a unique way given the unique organic form of each person's mind. The natural mind is totally unaware of these processes going on in the spiritual mind.

Further, the mental-spiritual substance of Divine love enters and activates the human will (or affective system) and hence gives rise to all our motives, needs, intentions, emotions, reactions, interests, or pleasures. This forms the center of everyone's inmost life and character as it is expressed uniquely by each individual's conduct and looks. Although the influx of Divine love is always the same for everyone, its effect on the human mind is variable according to each person's freely chosen loves and preferences. Each individual is born with a unique anatomy, identity, and endless future extended to eternity. This unique individuality is a reflection of the built-in mental genes known in literature as the "soul". Such as the soul is, such is the love, consequently such is the life and the future.

God's omnipotent management system guarantees that every human being remains constantly in a state of affective freedom of the will. The continuous maintenance by God of freedom of the will in every human being is required logically in order to insure that everyone's character reflects their loves. Love and freedom are closely related concepts in that human beings feel free when they can act according to their loves and the affections therefrom. Whatever people love, that they want to do, and they actually do so unless prevented by fear or prudence.

To recapitulate the proposal so far, the spiritual world is the mental world and it is constructed out of the living mental substances of Divine love and truth from the spiritual sun, which is the first proceeding of God into creation. This spiritual substance does not have material existence in matter, space, and time. It has spiritual existence in the form of mental states. Spiritual heat and light as substance is the source of the formation of unique individual minds, each being an organic structure that has permanence, identity, and a developmental history from birth to eternity. This immortal permanent organic structure is called the spiritual body. *Every human mind is a spiritual body.* With this

additional theoretical concept we can account for the fact that our thoughts and feelings, or mind, are never located in the physical body but have a separate existence in their own world that is called the spiritual world of eternity.

Implications

The Two-Body Hypothesis

At birth we possess the spiritual body located in the spiritual world and the physical body located in the natural world. Occurrence of electro-chemical activities in the physical body and brain is the occasion for the occurrence of a corresponding mental activity in the spiritual body that we call experiencing sensations or sensing. This correspondence of activity in the body and mind is built-in from creation. From birth everyone knows how to move the eyes, mouth, fingers, legs, etc. This is the physical body (as the effect) being activated by correspondence from the mind or spiritual body (as cause). The mental function called the will (or affective system) has a built in correspondence with the physical voluntary sensorimotor system, thereby allowing people to move when they want to. Cognitive activities in the spiritual body correspond to the respiratory system of the physical body. The will and the understanding, or the affective and cognitive systems, operate together in the same way that the circulatory system or heart operates in synchrony with the respiratory system or lungs (Swedenborg 1763 [DLW]; James 2008).

The concept of two bodies corresponding to each other and each existing in their own world may be called the substantive dualism perspective in science. This involves the existence of dualism or two worlds, one filled with substantive or immaterial mental objects that are not in time, and one filled with material objects that God creates to be correspondences with the substantive objects. In this way God exercises total control over the physical and the mental worlds, keeping them in lock step activities and functions. The physical world has fixed time-space properties while the mental world does not, as is evident from thoughts and dreams. It is customary to describe the spiritual world as being outside time or apart from time, and the word “eternity” is often associated with that concept (Swedenborg 1763 [DLW]). What is created outside time or apart from time is called eternity and is associated in the literature with the afterlife.

The expression “*from eternity*” is associated with the idea of no beginning. God is the only infinite being of whom “from eternity” can be predicated (Swedenborg 1749 [AC]). The expression “*to eternity*” refers to “no end in progression” or endlessness. The human mind once born progresses to eternity once we pass on from the physical body and world in time to the spiritual body and world in eternity.

Since God is omnipotent and perfectly loving and wise, it is illogical to think that we are born, then we die, and that’s the end of our existence. Think about you as a parent. Would you create a child that is going to die when you can create one that is going to be immortal? Obviously we would create children and adults who continue to live forever.

The nature of love is to desire to make another happy to eternity. Now if we would do that, how can we think rationally that God would not? God is omnipotent and so is capable of creating human beings who are permanently alive once being born, that is, who are immortal. Since God is perfect love and wisdom, it is rational to think that God would create conscious human beings to live forever.

But it is necessary to understand how God manages this transition to human immortality if we are going to fully accept such a principle and use it to reason about other spiritual things.

God creates each of our existence as a unique immortal individual starting from when we are conceived and born. *Our existence starts simultaneously in both worlds of time and of eternity apart from time.* This means that we are born dual citizens— of the natural world and of the spiritual world. Our mind from birth onward to eternity is housed or organically contained in an immortal spiritual body, and *no part of the mind is located in our temporary physical body.*

The two bodies are functionally interconnected and act in perfect unison as long as they are so connected from birth. At death, the functional or correspondential connection between the physical body and the spiritual body is broken. We then awaken in a new sphere continuing our immortal existence in the spiritual body, which is in the spiritual world of eternity. In this mental state we share a life of community with other individuals with whom our inner loves are compatible. The laws of spiritual association in the mental world of the afterlife are governed by the compatibility of loves with others. Like minded and like loving individuals consociate with each other spontaneously due to the attraction they feel when in each other's company. The opposite is the case with people whose loves are opposed to each other and the resultant aversion keeps them apart from communication or awareness.

Fifth Conclusion: The Eternity of the Afterlife is Our Mental World Now

It follows from what has already been put forward above that the spiritual world of the afterlife in eternity is the source of the mental substances that compose the mind and its spiritual body. These mind-substances and structures cannot be physical. What then are they? What kind of substances can create the mind and its sensations, thoughts, and feelings? What are feelings made of? One logical answer is that thoughts and feelings are mental objects anatomically composed of mental substances that are available in the environment of the spiritual-mental world. As we learn and mature mentally we gather more mental substances from the spiritual environment. These mental substances are needed for constructing and growing the organs of the mind. Our spiritual body is a composite growth of mental substances, formed and organized into anatomical structures suited for sensations and pleasures, and structures for thinking and memory, and those for feelings, loves, and affections.

The mental world in which we exist today is the same mental world that we experience in the afterlife world of eternity.

The mental world creates the apparent spaces that one experiences in thoughts, in dreams, and in the spiritual world after the dying process. Consider that in the physical world there is only one physical space and all physical objects, from the largest galaxies to the smallest atomic particles, *are in that same space*. Similarly there is only one mental world for the human race and all human beings are born into the same mental world. The startling conclusion from this realization is that every person has mental access to every other person that was ever born. While this may seem impractical when still attached to the physical body, it becomes eminently useful when we begin to experience the afterlife in our spiritual body that is no longer tethered to the physical and where distance is mental, thus variable at will.

We know the world of the afterlife, or eternity, very well indeed. We are so skilled at it that we are able to create dreams that contain dramatic scenery, exciting events, intense sensations of taste and touch, unlimited resources in terms of how many houses or diamonds or bottles of wine you want to have, or how famous you want to be. But also this: how scared you can get with amazingly real nightmares. All this we can expertly produce in our imagination and dream world.

People illogically think that what we produce in the imagination is not real. But when we start thinking rationally about it, we can see that the objects we produce in our imagination or dream are “real appearances” (Swedenborg 1758 [HH]). Thoughts and dreams cannot just be “nothing”. It’s not logical to think that a memory, thought, or a dream is nothing. A dream is constructed, produced, created in our spiritual body that is made up of the affective system, the cognitive system, and the sensorimotor system. These three organ systems make up our mind at various levels of operation. The affective system’s operations are experienced as having feelings, affections, loves, emotions, and intentions. The cognitive system’s operations are experienced as having thoughts, memories, plans, and representations. The sensorimotor system’s operations are experienced as having sensations, pleasures, and movements.

One might think that since the afterlife of eternity is a mental world it is somehow less real as the life we seem to have in our physical body on earth. Further consideration would show that our mental life is far more basic, important, and critical to us than anything we can have in our earth environment. This is seen clearly when we consider that our mental life of sensing, thinking, and feeling is the only life we actually have, as there is nothing of life in anything physical we can have in this world. This underscores the next concept, which is that the quality of our mental life in eternity is determined cumulatively by the quality of our mental life from birth to the dying process.

The spiritual body has like all plant and organic growth a cumulative pattern. Everything that comes later is conditioned by what comes earlier. Such as our character is at death

such it is in eternity. A truthful and sincere character remains so after the dying process. A cruel and selfish person remains so in the afterlife. Love is supreme in the human mind. To be cruel is to love being cruel and to be compassionate or considerate is to love being considerate. Our loves create our character, which creates the quality of our interactions with others here and hereafter.

Implications

Nowhere in literature to my knowledge has it been suggested that the spiritual world of the afterlife in eternity is the same thing as the mental world we are all in now.

Swedenborg's otherworldly experience of the spiritual world directly by observation while still living in this world, is unique in science, philosophy, and literature (Hanegraaff 2007; Tafel 1890). He confirmed by living experience for 27 years continuously that the spiritual world and the mental world are one and the same thing. This makes rational sense only if we accept the proposal that the spiritual world has been created and is being maintained by God through the intermediary of spiritual love-substance and spiritual light-substance that are said to be streaming continuously from the spiritual sun, as discussed above.

It would seem that the implications of this definition are far reaching for philosophy, science, religion, and psychology. The spiritual world of eternity is therefore not something abstract and far off but is something actual, substantive, and very familiar to all human beings from birth. Our mind is immortal because it is born and remains forever in the spiritual world. To be *born into eternity* is every human being's property and fate. For this idea to be rational, however, one must accept the concept of the two-bodies in dualism, as discussed. The spiritual body, which is the mind, is in its own realm since it cannot be in the physical realm.

Those who think of human immortality without the spiritual body in the spiritual world think either of the idea of reincarnation (Stevenson 1980) or the idea of physical resurrection (Tipler 1994; Hanegraaff 2002). Swedenborg (1749 [AC]) points out that the belief in a physical resurrection on earth is based directly on a literal interpretation of the Bible verses where "sepulcher" and "resurrection" are discussed in their "internal" or spiritual sense:

That a "sepulcher" signifies resurrection, and also regeneration is plain in Ezekiel:

Therefore prophesy, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord Jehovah, Behold I will open your sepulchers, and cause you to come up out of your sepulchers, O My people; and I will bring you to the ground of Israel. And ye shall know that I am Jehovah, when I have opened your sepulchers, and caused you to come up out of your sepulchers, O My people; and shall put

My spirit in you, and ye shall live, and I shall place you on your own ground (Ezek. 37:12-14);

where the Prophet treats of the bones that were made to live, and in the internal sense of regeneration. That he treats of regeneration is plainly evident, for it is said, "when I shall put My spirit in you and ye shall live, and I shall place you on your own ground." "Sepulchers" here denote the former man and his evils and falsities, to "open," and to "come up out of" which is to be regenerated. Thus the idea of a sepulcher perishes and is as it were put off, when the idea of regeneration or of the new life comes in.

That the sepulchers were opened, and many bodies of the saints that were sleeping arose and went forth out of their sepulchers after the Lord's resurrection, and entered into the holy city, and appeared unto many (Matt. 27:52, 53), involves what is similar, namely resurrection because of the Lord's resurrection, and in a more interior sense every resurrection. That the Lord raised Lazarus from the dead (John 11:1 and the following verses) also involves the raising up of a new church from the Gentiles; for all the miracles wrought by the Lord, because they were Divine, involved states of His church. The signification also is similar where it is said that the man who was cast into the sepulcher of Elisha, when he touched his bones, revived (2 Kings 13:20, 21); for by Elisha was represented the Lord. (Swedenborg 1749: AC No. 2916)

Several other passages in the Old and New Testaments are similarly analyzed to show that in each case the text is discussing regeneration of the person and resuscitation into the spiritual world of the afterlife, as may be seen directly in the passage where Jesus on the cross tells the thief hanging next to Him that "Today" he will be in paradise with the Lord, that is, referring to immediate resuscitation in the world of spirits:

The Word teaches that a person is alive after death, for example where it says that God is not the God of the dead but of the living, Matt. 22:32; that Lazarus was taken up after death to heaven, but the rich man was cast down to hell, Luke 16:22, 23ff; that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are there, Matt. 8:11; 22:32; Luke 16:23-25, 29; that Jesus told the robber, Today you will be with Me in paradise, Luke 23:43; and in other statements elsewhere. (Swedenborg, 1749: AC No. 10597)

Sixth Conclusion:

We Are Born With Heaven and Hell in Our Mind

Observation shows that people seem to alternate in different circumstances between two mental states, one good and positive, and the other not good and negative. Since people tend to have their own definitions of what is good and bad it is necessary to give a rationally justifiable definition. *When we acknowledge that God exists as an omnipotent and perfect Divine Human Person we can extend this idea to define rationally and*

objectively what is good and bad in human life. God creates human beings to bring them to live in mutual love happily forever in eternity. It is clear that the end of human life is to grow into an unceasing mental state of utmost happiness, love, and intelligence. This mental state may be called heaven in the individual's mind. Every thing that contributes and enhances this heavenly life may be called heavenly or good. Also, everything that detracts and is contrary to this heavenly life may be called hellish, bad, or evil.

Every person has good traits like being willing to think and carry out required tasks that are of benefit to others or society. To complete a task requires persistence in motivation for doing useful things, and this is a heavenly trait. To raise children requires parental self-sacrifice and thus the love and care of others, and this is a heavenly trait. But to snap at someone in anger without caring in that moment about how it makes the other person feel, is a hellish trait. To cheat and lie and deceive so that we can unfairly obtain something, or so that we can take advantage of someone, are hellish traits. To reject someone unfairly due to prejudice is a hellish trait. Some people suffer from acute depression and are unable to function normally, and this is a hellish mental condition. Being aggressive on the road or obnoxious to a neighbor, are hellish traits, as are mistreating animals or wasting resources that belong to the public. Whatever supports and promotes mutual love and a life of useful activities is heavenly. Whatever is selfish and destructive of community is hellish because contrary to heavenly states.

So people grow up with a pack of heavenly traits and a pack of hellish traits in their personality and character. The hellish traits gather together and form a mental society in our mind, and this society is called a hell. The heavenly traits form a heavenly society in our mind. God is involved in every detail of setting up heaven and hell in the individual's mind. This process of separation of heavenly and hellish traits in our mind is critical to the quality of our life in eternity. God does not allow heaven and hell to mix together in our mind because they mutually destroy each other, being opposites and hatreds to one another.

As may be known from everyday observation people alternate between heavenly states and hellish states on a periodic basis – monthly, weekly, hourly, and by the minute and second. God's omnipotence controls the exact alternation, when, how much, and where in accordance with the Laws of Divine Providence and Permissions. God's purpose in activating the person's hidden hellish traits is to bring awareness to the individual of the varieties of evil intentions in the personality and character of every person. Unless hellish traits are acknowledged as being in oneself they cannot be rejected in freedom and hence God cannot remove them. God can remove evils by giving the person as-of-self power to resist one's evil loves. But this requires the person's cooperation or willingness to undergo the process of regeneration of character through temptation and voluntary resistance. Only in this way can the love be removed which otherwise clings to the will forever. This is the meaning of the Lord insisting on washing Peter's feet and warning him that without that he cannot be regenerated:

If I do not wash you, you have no part with Me. Simon Peter said to Him, Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and head! Jesus said to him, He who is washed has no need except that his feet be washed, but is clean all over. Now you are clean, but not all of you. John 13:4-17.

'He who is washed has no need except that his feet be washed' means that anyone who has been reformed needs to be cleansed only in regard to natural things, that is, to have evils and falsities removed from them. For when that happens all is ordered by the influx of spiritual things from the Lord. (Swedenborg 1749: AC No. 3147)

While we are still connected to the physical world we can continue this alternation of mental states between heavenly and hellish traits, but once we are consciously in the spiritual body after the dying process and consequent resuscitation, this alternation process cannot continue. We are faced with choosing between the two, either to give up the collection of hellish traits and keep all the heavenly traits, or we must choose the heavenly and relinquish all the hellish. *Every human being is faced with this biologically required last choice.* If we choose the hellish traits or states, we cannot retain a single heavenly trait or state. Whatever loves and states are opposite or incompatible with our final choice, are silenced and repressed as if they no longer existed in our character. We thus become all good or all bad! As it is written: “To all those who have, more will be given, in ample supply; but from those who do not have, even what they have will be taken away. (Matthew 25:28, 29; 13:12; Mark 4:25; Luke 8:18; 19:24-26)”.

Implications

We all are familiar with hell in our daily lives and experiences. By observing our own thoughts and feelings we can notice how we create a heaven and a hell in our mind. For instance, we may experience jealousy of a person at work, and we are conscious of a negative emotion when we think or see that person, like fear, resentment, and annoyance. These unpleasant states are populated with hellish feelings. They do not exist in the heavens of our mind where only positive and pleasant feelings and thoughts can exist. Further, we notice a strong desire to be hostile to this person, to plot against the person, to try to get this person into trouble. And we can also notice that when this person is in trouble, we feel satisfied, happy, energized. This is a scenario of how we can build up hell in our mind, until it pervades all our thinking at work, and then everywhere.

We can see rationally that we are not responsible for this hell – initially. These negative emotions and hostile intentions and acts seem to tumble out of us, spontaneously. Even when we try to stop them, they persist. So how can God hold us responsible for them? *But God does not hold us responsible, nor does God ever punish or do evil to any human beings.* This follows logically from the conclusion that God is perfect in goodness and is omnipotent. It is the human being who freely chooses out of preference to create hellish

habits on a cumulative daily basis. In this way the mind is formed into a collection of hellish states, while the heaven in the mind shrinks and is reduced to inactivity.

To create a heaven in the mind we need to do the opposite of what we feel like most of the time. When people strive to please others because they feel bad when others are upset because of them – this is building a heavenly society in the mind. Some people devote tremendous care to a hobby or interest. To get better at it becomes their striving, and this is building a heaven in the mind because they benefit others or society by striving to be good at things that ultimately will benefit others, not just self.

Our heaven in eternity is built from our heavenly traits. But we cannot hang on to them if we are unwilling to let go of every single hellish trait. People who are unwilling to let go of some hellish trait but desire strongly to be in the heaven of their mind, are going to experience deep conflicts when they enter the afterlife. Surely this is going to mean a lot of mental anguish for them before they can let go of the hellish traits. This is sometimes subtle. For instance, some people will avoid being dishonest out of fear of getting caught, even though they would do it if the fear were not there. You can have two people, both avoiding being dishonest, but one does it for an external reason (presence of fear), while the other does it for an internal reason (wanting to be helpful or useful). In that case, one will choose hell while the other will choose heaven, even though both lived similar outward lives.

It is here proposed therefore that hell is not a punishment for past misdeeds, but a preferred choice stemming from past choices. And likewise, heaven is not a reward for being good, but a preferred choice leading to our willingness to give up all the hellish states to which we are still attached by some love. *One may wonder what would make people want to choose hell for their eternal mental states?*

Conclusion

To review what has been argued, these six conclusions follow the proposition that God exists:

1. God is a Person, at once Divine and Human
2. God's omnipotence must control every event
3. God is perfect in love and rationality
4. There are two worlds, one physical in time, the other spiritual in eternity
5. The eternity of the afterlife is our mental world now
6. We are born with heaven and hell in our mind

Together these six conclusions establish a rational theory of God, creation, and relationship with the Divine. They are introduced here as a unified theory to show that God can be introduced into the rational discourse of science. This *religious-scientific* theory allows scientists to have a personal relationship with God without feeling that this relationship is unrelated to the reality of their work. This proposal may also serve to help

expand the theory of God in science by pursuing other rational conclusions that have not been examined here. There is no functional usefulness in continuing to uphold the negative bias in science. Regardless of one's cultural religion the rational conclusions open up a discourse on God that avoids mystery and so called blind faith. The proposal also provides a rational basis for connecting morality and spirituality, and gives a new perspective on how to resolve the problem of the existence of evil in theistic systems by considering the function of evil in a person's continuation of life in the afterlife.

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