

Readings in the Word which connect up with this session.

Genesis 1; Psalm 8; John 3:1-15; Isaiah 1 (can be read in 2 parts - verses 1-9, 10-20 and 21-31; Psalm 11; Psalm 46; Psalm 103.

Reflections

How much do you know about love? Love of parents towards their children, and vice versa. Do you find such love energising, or does it sometimes feel like a heavy obligations? Read Psalm 27.

If you are a parent, how do you react to your children's (or niece's & nephew's) mistakes? Do they make a lot of difference to your attitude? Read Psalm 103.11-18.

When you make some serious mistakes, in which way do they affect your relationship with the Lord? And how do you think the Lord reacts to your mistakes? Read Luke 15.11-32.

When we read that the Lord's love towards us never changes, whatever we do or are, could we begin to think He does not really care either way about us - whatever we are, however we live? Read Jeremiah 31:1-11 (or to verse 26).

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United Search for Divine Providence



Session 1

**“Now it is permitted to enter with understanding
into the mysteries of faith”**

This is a quote from The True Christian Religion 508:3, which describes that Swedenborg saw in heaven a magnificent temple which had an inscription the words, NUNC LICET. Those words are explained in the heading of this session. They are a wonderful beginning to this study of Divine Providence, because this is just what we shall be doing: enter with understanding into the mysteries of faith.

Theologians and Christian clergy always insisted that, “We human beings are finite and we cannot understand the Almighty who is Infinite. God is a Mystery beyond our human understanding.” This idea has become so entrenched that should anyone offer an explanation of God's nature, he or she would be marked as foolish and simple, since he does not even understand the problem!

And yet, a perfectly sensible explanation has existed since the publication of Swedenborg's works, but these have been deliberately ignored on the grounds that Swedenborg was not really of sound mind. And yet, those without prejudice can find them enlightening and as we shall see, the operations of the Lord's Love and Wisdom manifest a high degree of common sense. How can that be?

It is stated in Genesis 1:27 that God created us in His image and likeness. There does not exist that unbridgeable gulf between us and the Divine. Whatever goes on within us reflects something of God. So let us start at the beginning.

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To find out more go to: www.new-church-lifeline.org.uk
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The Divine Providence is the government of the Divine Love and Wisdom of the Lord.

DP paragraphs 1-26

Because everything in nature proceeds from higher realities, it is as well to get the first correspondence quite clear: LOVE and WISDOM of God.

Love and wisdom are as distinct as *heat* and *light*. Think about this for a moment and you will clearly see the difference. And yet, both must be present if anything is to exist, be alive or grow. If they were to be separated – nothing can happen except that all would lead to destruction and annihilation.

Understanding correspondences is very important. Divine creative love and wisdom filter down through all the successive degrees right down to nature. But they need to be united. In our own mind love alone can achieve nothing unless thoughts add form and reality. “United they stand, divided they fall!” Unfortunately, our mind is often divided, pulling in different directions and we achieve very little as a result.

This is really a brief summary of the arguments in paragraphs 3-21. It is about the way things have to harmonise and work together. Even those whose love is selfish and evil must use false thinking to attain their ends. The Lord needs to lead us to some balance and equilibrium whereby our mind could decide anything and feel free and ‘human’ in its self-consciousness. This sounds strange at first, nevertheless it is true!

Some of these ideas may come as a surprise, especially the fact that what goes on within us is a reflection of Divine creativity. Consider how much pleasure and a sense of humanness comes to us when we do achieve something. We look at it with pleasure and pride, even if it is only the very first sand castle we managed to make!

“*And God saw everything that He had made, and behold, it was very good.*” Gen 1:31 Now do not tell me that you have not felt that Divine satisfaction!

Some key passages I would like you to read.

- 3:1** All things created from Divine Love by means of Divine Wisdom. Wisdom without love, or understanding without the will, cannot form a single thought.
- 5:1-2** The Oneness of God is reflected in every created thing.
- 6:1** The more something is analysed, the more complex it becomes (not more simple) because the closer it approaches the infinity of the Creator.
- 11** This is a wonderful description of love, of goodness and usefulness in life.
- 16** An explanation of how we can be an image of God if we are ‘united’ within.
- 19:1** An article as to what is truly ‘powerful’ in our life.
- 21-23** Even the evil have their use - otherwise they would perish - thus they provide an equilibrium between good and evil. Very challenging!
- NB** Of course, if you possibly can, read all the paragraphs but if you can’t, do have a look at the above, please!

Prayer

Let us try a different form of prayer, one which is silent and without words, but spend a few silent moments with each thought:

Think and feel the ever-present Providence of the Lord.
Open your heart and mind to receive it in peace and gratitude.
Resolve to do this several times each day, anywhere and at any time.
You are the creation of the Lord’s Love and Wisdom.