

Readings from the Word which connect up with this session.

On the infinity of God - Deuteronomy 33.26-29; Lord's creative love and constant presence John 15,1-9; Lord's love is everlasting - Jeremiah 31 (rather a long chapter but you can break it up); belief and unbelief Psalms 10, 48, 145.

Reflections

The ideas we have been learning and thinking about are very profound, and many would say far beyond our understanding. But when explained, they closely relate to our own experiences and we realise that they are quite simple and not at all difficult. Only the truth can be simple! Why should the Creator put a barrier between us and Himself? He desires us to understand Him! Which parent wouldn't?

The more you read about the Lord's creative love, the more you realise that everything was created for us, His children. Think about this in a personal way – God being your Creator and Parent. What is He teaching us all the time? What does He want from us? Read Micah 6.1-8.

Christopher Hasler

United Search for Divine Providence



Session 3

The Divine Providence of the Lord regards what is Infinite and Eternal

1 Divine Providence regards what is Infinite and Eternal (DP 48-51)

This is possibly the most profound teaching that we shall find in this study since it is about Infinity and Eternity: the creative reality behind everything. But can we who are finite human beings comprehend that which appears incomprehensible?

Well, let's try. We know certain things which we take for granted: "I know that I exist, live, think and love . . . but where did I come from? There must be something that exists and is real in order to create me and everything else round me."

The Creator or the Cause of everything must in some way be superior to creation and so we learn that God is infinite and eternal. But can we, finite and temporal beings, understand Infinity or Eternity? The answer the book gives us is twofold: No, we can't understand it, but in a way we can because we are able to see a reflection of the Infinite and Eternal all around us. Let's think of infinity first. As we look around us we realise that no two things have ever been created alike: people, animals, leaves on trees, even snowflakes! There is infinite variety in all things. Now for eternity (which is outside time). Often, when we are absorbed in something interesting, or are with someone we love - time (the finite side of eternity) seems to disappear from our consciousness. And we have a marvellous glimpse of eternity, of timelessness! This is usually

This session is part of a complete course being published online.
To find out more go to: www.new-church-lifeline.org.uk
Click on Resources and then United Search for Divine Providence

associated with our experience of love. But when love is absent we are weighed down by time and space.

Remember that we were created in the image and likeness of God (Genesis 1.26) therefore the reflection of His nature is deeply built into us and if we follow His commandments we shall become more and more aware of His nature. If we do the opposite, and do our own thing, we shall either reject the idea of a creator, or we shall see Him in our image and be ready to commit all sorts of crimes 'in His name'.

However we can begin to understand His nature of Infinity and Eternity by leading a loving and unselfish life and we shall be aware of Him as the infinite and eternal source of life and love. This will make us humble and we'll realise that we shall understand that everything God does has eternity and infinity in view, especially where we are concerned.

We may never be eternal, because we had a beginning, but we are immortal and have feelings and thoughts which are no longer bound by space and time. See DP9 and if possible read TCR 31 for a further insight into this.

2 The Infinite and Eternal cannot regard but what is infinite and eternal in what is created. (DP 52-62)

This surely is common sense. Whatever anyone does reflects his or her nature. Think of a doctor or teacher; both want to do what is best for patient and pupil so that they may be healthy and wise for the rest of their life. God cannot but do the same on a much more perfect scale as He really loves and instructs us for everlasting life. Just think of that: we shall never be bored in heaven: continually evolving into greater perfection and usefulness!

Now for some key passages which need thinking about.

57 Let us briefly think further about this. Seldom, when we have a new idea, does it come singly, our mind is suddenly filled with them! It becomes difficult to choose one and develop it. That is an image of infinity and propagation without end. This is another small perception of the mind of God which we can experience.

58 An important thought about our individuality and uniqueness. Our attainment of heaven is not by some single formula; "Only believe and you will be saved!" If you are a parent with several children, you love them all, but each one differently. Each one is quite unique and so is your attitude and dealing with each one. That is the Lord's way also. See Matthew 7.7-11 The Lord wants us to be happy for ever.

59 Our life on earth will come to an end, so how can we compare that to the eternal life in heaven? We need to adjust our thinking to the Lord's divine purposes. You can focus on this by reading Matthew 18.1-9 which shows the Lord's constant desire to link us with heaven even now.

60-63 Discusses how we reach heaven or hell. We are drawn by our loves unerringly toward the home which reflects our loves and character. We are never forced against our will but find our own path which leads us into the environment we love. There is no judgement, no sentence: simply our own desires fulfilled.

Important Note: Swedenborg wrote in Latin and frequently uses the word *Homo* which means a human being or person irrespective of sex. Yet most of our older translations render it as 'man' which suggests that Swedenborg was always writing about the masculine sex. Not so! Modern translations use the all inclusive 'person' or 'human being'.

Prayer – silent

Some people can become very serious during prayer, their face very tense, even frowning and searching for the right word. This is why I suggest a silent meditation so that we can relax and the best way is to 'smile' in your heart and think about the Lord's love and care for you, His child. Feel yourself to be in the sunlight and warmth of His love - let it fill you. Feel gratitude as your heart whispers, "Thank you!"