

watchful eye of Providence.

212-213 I do feel these two paragraphs are among the most astounding Swedenborg ever wrote. They ask, "Is there such a thing as 'Fortune' or 'Misfortune'? And the answer is, "Yes, because nothing happens without Providence." But why do good people have misfortune sometimes? Answer: Because they might come to believe that the Lord is rewarding them by seeing they are better than others! This would lead them into selfish opportunism and they would get puffed up and feel, "The Lord is on my side. I can't go wrong." We must never 'challenge' the Lord and say to Him: "You can let me win if you want to!" We must learn to trust the Lord in all things, but never put Him to the test. Read Luke 12:22-34 – every moment of our lives we are choosing between heaven and hell. What an exciting challenge the Lord puts before us!

Meditation and Prayers without words

Having completed the 5 Laws of DP last month, we have now started delving into the very depths of our psyche to discover its limitations as well as the reassurance that the Lord is always fully present with us by means of His Providence. This is such a tremendous revelation that ought to leave us speechless! So I suggest you simply 'float', allowing yourself to savour the safety of the stream of His Providence (see DP 186) as you read these verses from the Word, which, if you wish, you can divide into shorter portions. They serve to reassure us in these very troubled times: Isaiah 32-33, Psalm 46, Mark 4:35-46.

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United Search for Divine Providence



Session 8

There is no such thing as our own prudence, it only appears that there is, and this appearance is important for us.

Divine Providence is universal because it is in the least particulars (DP 191-213)

Since Sigmund Freud, the founder of psychoanalysis (1856-1939), many neurological schools of thought have sprung up, but invariably they are materialistic in outlook, since they do not have an insight into the human psyche, which is spiritual. Yet in 14 pages of this Session we are given a unique revelation from the Lord. His presence within the core of our personality is constant. Without understanding this universal presence of Providence within us, we cannot know how our mind and the inner self function. These 14 pages are your key to understanding how you can cooperate with the Lord's Providence within you. This is a unique privilege, and perhaps this is the most important and practical chapter in the book.

Please read Isaiah 40:25-31 and let these majestic words soak into your consciousness as you consider and feel the Lord's creative and constant presence within each one of us.

191–192 Conflict and contradiction. That is what we are warned about: to our senses our bodies appear solid and real. Yet we also know that matter is not really as solid as it appears, because at the level of sub-atomic particles it is much more complex and full of energy and unimaginable speeds. To understand the reality of things and of ourselves is something only the Lord can reveal to us. We have to learn to distinguish the appearance from the reality.

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192-197 Sit quietly for a few moments and think about the 'secret' inner you, as well as your own uniqueness. You were created to be yourself, but where do your thoughts come from? They can only come from your affections or the love within you. That is their real source. But where does that love, your energy, come from? That can only come from the Lord's love, the real source of everything in creation. We are not just close to it, we are within it: it is our life!

Note 193:2 There are two principles of life in us, one natural, the other spiritual; yet what would life be without affections, delights and pleasures? The only problem is that because of hellish interference we may easily develop selfish and evil inclinations in order to enjoy our pleasures. This is a constantly repeated message: we stand half way between heaven and hell!

197-200 These affections of our life's love are however known to the Lord, and to Him alone. This is a merciful provision for our own protection so that the Lord can gradually lead us to higher and more angelic affections and delights which, in short, are to love and serve our neighbour. We can then be more in tune with the Lord's love and wisdom and receive them, though we can never claim them as our own. They are the 'holy riches' which you can increase by giving them to others so that they too can be blessed. Thus you become the living channel of His love. The parable of the Rich Fool in Luke 12:13-21 is a clear illustration of the riches we can receive and share. You can read it right now and discuss whether we are gathering the true riches. These paragraphs really are about the very core of your life. No psychologist could explain so much about your inner self.

But another very important insight and warning is given to us: Whatever we like, we automatically call 'good'. You can see the danger in this. Hitler thought that it was a 'good thing' to get rid of the Jews. How essential it is to be warned of this! We should not fall into the same trap. We must always get to the basics and start with the Ten Commandments. They alone tell us in very clear terms what is good and what is evil. This is something we cannot decide for ourselves! Mercifully, our life's real delight is, is known to the Lord alone at every moment of our life. He is constantly trying to moderate it and introduce higher and worthier alternatives which will lead us to greater and purer happiness.

201-204 Here we get a strong reminder, if we need one, that Divine Providence is universal in every minute detail of our love and thought.

What this is telling us is that it is not just a general and distant oversight - as someone who might tap the barometer to see if it is still working! No, this is immediate and constant and very individual. You could reply, "Yes, and to me as well as to everyone else. He is present in fullness with His infinite Love. Aren't we all very blessed?" That is so: He singles everyone of us for His full attention. He is universally and fully present everywhere. You may like to talk about the implication of what is written in Zechariah 4:6-10.

There is also a marvellous paragraph in 201:3 about creationism in scientific terms. It is an impossibility. Things, including all living things, just cannot govern and organise themselves. Every cell in our body is under that universal and constant Providence of the Lord.

205-209 **A very interesting discourse on atheism.** But please do not decide who is or is not an atheist. Many religions see others who have beliefs different from their own as atheists. And there are many people, apparently atheists, who simply cannot accept Christian dogma of three divine persons, or that God sacrificed His Son on the cross before He could forgive humanity. Real atheists are those who acknowledge nature alone as self-created and do not accept the possibility that there may be any sort of intelligent creator. The root of their difficulty is that they see themselves as wise and powerful, who do not need any help from 'above'. This is a wonderful insight into atheism. Make sure you read up to 209. It is very sad, but also true.

210-211 Providence could effect nothing within us unless we felt and thought that we ourselves decide and dispose all things in our life. Unless we felt and believed this wholeheartedly, we would simply give up, lose all pleasure in life and resign ourselves and wait for influx. "It's all in God's hands, and I have no say in anything!" The great danger is that the hells might use such an opportunity to invade our minds and begin to influence them and then we really would lose any control of our lives and of our true liberty and rationality. We are advised: "Use prudence as a servant who faithfully dispenses his Master's goods and fulfils his orders." But we need to do it 'as of ourselves'. It may be difficult for us to come to terms with this inner conflict - that the Lord knows and foresees our whole life, when and what we shall decide, but He still allows us our choice. Free will is essential to our humanity. The decisions we are making are never meaningless. We ought to learn this by experience because we have to live with the consequences for ever! That surely must be clear to us. Everything we do is 'as of ourselves', yet under the