

Quotes from the Word: God Meant It for Good

OLD TESTAMENT

The Lord was with Joseph and showed him mercy... (Genesis 39:21).

Joseph said to them [his brothers], "So not be afraid, for am I in the place of God? But as for you, you meant evil against me; but God meant it for good, in order to bring it about as it is this day, to save many people alive. Now therefore, do not be afraid; I will provide for you and your little ones." And he comforted them and spoke kindly to them. So Joseph dwelt in Egypt, he and his father's household (Genesis 50:20).

Joseph is a fruitful bough, a fruitful bough by a well;
His branches run over the wall.
The arms of his hands were made strong
By the hands of the Mighty God of Jacob.
(Genesis 49:22,24)

The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord,
And He delights in his way.
Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down;
For the Lord upholds him with his hand.
(Psalm 37:23-25)

The salvation of the righteous is from the Lord;
He is their strength in the time of trouble.
And the Lord shall help them and deliver them;
He shall deliver them from the wicked,
And save them, because they trust in Him.
(Psalm 37:39-40)

I would have lost heart, unless I had believed
That I would see the goodness of the Lord
In the land of the living.
Wait on the Lord;
Be of good courage,
And He shall strengthen your heart;
Wait, I say, on the Lord!
(Psalm 27:13-14)

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me
All the days of my life;
And I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.
(Psalm 23:6)

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NEW TESTAMENT

“Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid” (John 14:27).

“You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you” (Matthew 5:43-44).

“Therefore do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you” (Matthew 6:31,33).

“He who endures to the end shall be saved” (Matthew 24:13).

“In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world” (John 16:33)

“Lo, I am with you always” (Matthew 28:20).

HEAVENLY DOCTRINE

JOSEPH

Joseph represents the Lord’s spiritual kingdom or the spiritual man, and also the good of faith (see *Arcana Coelestia* 3969:6).

Joseph came to Egypt, where first of all he served in the house of Potiphar, the chief of the attendants, then was held in custody, and after that was made the governor over Egypt, so that the way might be represented in which the Lord by progressive stages made the Human within Himself Divine, and so that all this might be written about in a Word that would contain matters of a Divine nature in its internal sense. This sense was intended to serve angels primarily, whose wisdom—which is beyond understanding or description when compared with human wisdom—is concerned with such Divine matters. It was intended at the same time to serve people who prefer historical to any other descriptions, in which, as people turn such descriptions over in their minds, angels can perceive—through an influx from the Lord—the matters of a Divine nature (*Arcana Coelestia* 5307:3).

“And you thought evil against me” means that the things which have become alienated intend nothing but evil. “God thought [to turn] it into good” means that the Divine turns it into good. “In order to do what is in accord with this day” means that this is in accord with order from eternity. “To bestow life on a great people” means that life is thereby imparted to those governed by the truths of good “And now, do not be afraid” means that they should not be anxious. “I will sustain you and your young children” means that they will have life from the

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Divine by way of the internal, through truth which is of the understanding and good which is of the will. “And he consoled them” means hope. “And spoke to their heart” means trust (*Arcana Coelestia* 6556).

THE LORD’S DIVINE PROVIDENCE

The Lord’s providence has in view what is eternal (*Arcana Coelestia* 7007:4).

The operation of the Divine Providence for the salvation of a person begins at his birth and continues right on to the end of his life, and afterwards to eternity (*Divine Providence* 332).

Everything done by God, that is, by the Lord, constitutes His Providence (*Arcana Coelestia* 5264:2).

The Lord leads a person as silently as an imperceptible stream or favoring current bears a vessel along (see *Divine Providence* 186).

It is granted that a person can see the Divine Providence in the back and not in the face; and this in a spiritual state and not in a natural state (*Divine Providence* 187).

Nothing at all could harm people whom the Lord is protecting, not even if the whole of hell were surrounding them, both from without and from within (*Arcana Coelestia* 968).

LOOKING TO WHAT IS GOOD

When the Lord is with someone, He leads him and makes provision so that all that happens, whether sad or joyful, may bring him what is good (see *Arcana Coelestia* 6303).

Those who trust in the Lord are constantly receiving good from Him; for whatever happens to them, whether it seems to be advantageous or not advantageous, is nevertheless good, for it serves as a means contributing to their eternal happiness (*Arcana Coelestia* 8480:1).

Be it known that the Divine Providence is universal, that is, in things the most minute; and that they who are in the stream of Providence are all the time carried along toward everything that is happy, whatever may be the appearance of the means (*Arcana Coelestia* 8478:4).

When use is in the first place, the Lord, from whom is all good, is in the first place and rules, and gives whatever contributes to eternal life and happiness; for, as has been said, all things of the Lord’s Divine providence pertaining to man look to what is eternal” (*Apocalypse Explained* 1193:4).

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WHEN THE LORD FORESEES EVIL

The Lord foresees what is evil and makes provision for what is good (*Arcana Coelestia* 7007:4).

In every present moment the Lord foresees evil, and provides good; and this He does from the first thread of life even to eternity (*Arcana Coelestia* 9296).

Providence consists in making provision for something and looking towards it, thus in leading towards good, and in protecting from evil—for the Lord provides what is good but foresees what is evil, and since He foresees what is evil He also protects a person from it, otherwise he could not be provided with good (*Arcana Coelestia* 9304).

In its dealings with evil, providence is nothing else than the directing and steering of evil towards a milder evil, and so far as possible towards good; but evil itself is foreseen (*Arcana Coelestia* 5155).

FREEDOM

A person is continually led by the Lord in freedom, and is also reformed and regenerated in freedom (*Divine Providence* 43).

Every person from early childhood is led and taught by the Lord, but because a person's freedom is never taken away, he can be led and taught only to the extent of his reception as though of himself (see *Divine Providence* 164:5).

To be led by good is freedom, while to be led by evil is enslavement; for to be led by good is to be led by the Lord, whereas to be led by evil is to be led by the devil (*Divine Providence* 43).

A person cannot be conjoined with the Lord—and so be reformed, regenerated, and saved—unless the person is permitted to act in freedom according to reason, for it is this that makes a person human (see *Divine Providence* 123:4).

A person is led by the Lord, and he takes no step into which and from which the Lord does not lead. The Lord leads him as if by the hand, permitting and withholding as far as a person is willing to follow in freedom. But if a person looks to the Lord he is brought by continual steps out of hell up towards heaven and into heaven (see *Apocalypse Explained* 1174:2).

If the freedom to will evil and by justifications to make it seemingly a matter of reason were to be taken away from the natural person, his freedom and rationality would perish, and with them his will and understanding, and he could not be led away from evils and be reformed, and so be conjoined with the Lord and live to eternity. Therefore the Lord guards the freedom in a person as a person does the pupil of his eye (*Divine Providence* 97).

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The nature of the Lord's Providence is such that it is linked together with Foresight; the one does not exist without the other. For evil things are foreseen, but good ones are provided; and the evils things that are foreseen are constantly being turned towards what is good by means of the Lord's provident arrangement, since the Divine end, which has good in view, governs everything. Nothing is therefore allowed to happen except to the end that something good may come out of it. But because a person possesses freedom that enables him to be reformed, he is turned from evil towards good so far as he freely allows himself to be turned (*Arcana Coelestia* 6489).

PERMISSIONS

There are now laws of permission per se or apart from the laws of Divine providence. Rather they are the same laws. When we say, therefore, that God permits, we do not mean that He wills, but that for the sake of the goal, which is salvation, He cannot prevent (*Divine Providence* 234).

Without permissions a person cannot be led by the Lord away from evil and so be reformed and saved. For if evils were not permitted to break out, a person would not see them and therefore would not acknowledge them, and so could not be brought to resist them. It is on this account that evils cannot be prevented (see *Divine Providence* 251).

TRUSTING IN THE LORD'S PROVIDENCE

Those are in the stream of Providence who put their trust in the Divine and attribute all things to Him; and that those are not in the stream of Providence who trust in themselves alone and attribute all things to themselves (*Arcana Coelestia* 8478:4).

Peace holds within itself trust in the Lord, the trust that He governs all things and provides all things, and that He leads toward an end that is good. When a person believes these things about Him he is at peace, since he fears nothing and no anxiety about things to come disturbs him. How far a person attains this state depends on how far he attains love to the Lord. Everything bad, especially trust in self, takes away the state of peace (*Arcana Coelestia* 8455:1,2).

Those who trust in the Divine are altogether different. Though concerned about the morrow, yet are they unconcerned, in that they are not anxious, let alone worried, when they give thought to the morrow. They remain even-tempered whether or not they realize desires, and they do not grieve over loss; they are content with their lot. They know that for those who trust in the Divine all things are moving toward an everlasting state of happiness, and that no matter what happens at any time to them, it contributes to that state (see *Arcana Coelestia* 8478:3).