

Prayers and Meditation

Keep thinking about the terrible state of mankind, and ask the Lord to strengthen your faith in Him. Accept that He is far more concerned than you are, but is not feeling helpless. He is gradually influencing us to recognise our mistakes and fight against them. We can't do more than that to help.

Psalm 16 shows 'The Lord's trust in Himself when He was on earth, because He was delivering the good, whom evil was infesting.'
(Quoted from Prophets & Psalms)

Read also: **Psalms 96-98.**

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Session 11

The laws of permission are also the Laws of Divine Providence

There are no laws of permission by themselves, separate from the Laws of Divine Providence – they are in fact the same!
(DP 234-274)

It is difficult not to call each section 'the most important in the book!' Again, look carefully at the *TABLE OF CONTENTS*, so that you do not get lost in the details. But something in this chapter is really very important, especially after the political storms we have been following recently. It is as if in the 18th century the Lord said, I will open all my ledgers and accounts, so that you can see how I work and the full reasons for it. This is really something unique and extraordinary. Make sure you don't miss the point!

Section 1 (234-247) All of us have been puzzled at some time with the things that happen around us: disasters, financial crises, terrible diseases, wars with extreme cruelty and dreadful weapons. We wonder, "Why doesn't God interfere to stop it?" It would be good, before we start, if you were to sit quietly for a few moments to think about such questions or even doubts you may have had. Write some of these questions down now. I promise, you should have the answer when you reach 274. The present section is really a resume of what will be explained in greater detail as you read on, but it is good to be aware that there are many possible angles of approach. Also there are many things which may cause us doubts or worries; and some are in the Bible itself.

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Section 2 (241-248) There are many biblical contradictions, which make people throw their arms up in despair. In the New Church we are blessed in knowing that there is a spiritual sense in the Word, so that we do not have to take everything literally. No, there was no such person as Adam, who in fact represents many generations in their gradual decline. Cain and Able represent the dual and continuing conflict of faith versus charity. The development unfolds; and yet the Lord does not seem to interfere or we would have no freedom, and we would cease to be human. Evils need to be seen, even experienced, before they can be overcome. Even the strange story of Solomon and his many foreign women represents that the Lord can unite with many strange religions without rejecting them. So here is a quite different explanation of what we might regard as degrading.

Section 3 (249-253) The wide-spread wickedness in the world worries all of us, and yet, the Lord does not step in. He “permits” such dreadful things to go on. Let us look at it from a more personal experience. If you are a parent (or uncle or auntie) your youngsters’ behaviour may upset you very deeply and you know that what they are up to is wrong and will bring them a lot of trouble and suffering. But you do not stop loving them (sometimes the opposite!) : you grin and bear it, hoping that in the end it will all come right. If you did reject them, because they are disobedient, you would not be allowing them the freedom to develop – often through making mistakes. The Lord also gives us time and opportunity to learn, and He never takes our freedom away from us. “Evils are permitted for the sake of the end which is salvation.” Read 249:4 with special attention: it is particularly applicable to our times. The point being made is that we should not seek status or wealth for their own sake, but only as means of opening doors of opportunity of greater service to the neighbour. You may like to discuss this in a group, but keep the focus on yourself, not the wicked world outside!

It is of course a bit of a shock to learn that the wicked at heart often perform uses with greater zeal than the pious. They have greater motivation! In fact, the Lord has to use the wicked to get things done. That is often how He “provides”. Note 250:4 and read Luke 16:1-12 in full - a parable, which often puzzles us. In brief, we owe everything we have to the Lord, and there is no way we can repay Him; but we can please Him by sharing what He has given us with others. 251:2 is very sobering : from birth we are a little hell, in perpetual discord with heaven! Alas, we can see flashes of hell fire in a child’s eyes when things do not go his/her way. That there are a lot of battles described in the Bible we

should not be surprised. This is going on within us, and every battle is the concern of Divine Providence. So fight on!

Section 4 (254-261) This is a universal problem with most religions. A Christian may wonder why God allowed Islam to appear in the 7th century AD to challenge Christianity. Muslims may be puzzled why Allah does not do away with all unbelievers. 254 reminds us that religion is spread from person to person, not directly from God, so there are a lot of opportunities to get human concepts mixed up with the message.

But it has already been explained that the Lord makes use of our selfishness to get something achieved. A pious hermit who keeps silent in his cave will not reach many people! And yet, those who can reach many will often misuse the opportunity, and choose to get rich or gain a great personal following. In the end, people will prefer to follow a person they can see and hear, than to follow an invisible God. Notice the interesting point in 260 : Judaism continues because the Jews still read the Hebrew Scriptures and when this takes place there is a conjunction of heaven and the Lord with the human race.

Section 5 (262-274) This is the most extraordinary part of the book we are studying. It is all of 10 pages long, but it is perhaps the shortest and clearest explanation of the Trinity we have in the Writings. In itself, This is one of the reasons why many turn away from Christianity and become atheists. They cannot accept the Trinity of three Persons! It is really worth a careful study and discussion. It hinges on a simple conundrum : who conceived Jesus Christ if, as the orthodox Churches maintain, there already was a Son from eternity? If it was God the Father, then He would have two sons - one from eternity, one born in time!

Please read carefully, and discuss if possible in your group, the following texts: Isaiah 7:14-15; Matthew 1:18-25; Luke 1:34-38; John 14:15-31. Be aware that this is the highest knowledge you can attain in this world. Give thanks for it! But also have sympathy for those who genuinely love the Lord, yet cannot really sort out the Trinity; and so they put it aside because, quite rightly, they know that the clergy do not understand it either, saying it is all a mystery. But it isn’t : the orthodox view is a mistake and misunderstanding! The glorious truth is that God is One, and always has been. This One God had revealed Himself and we can see Him in our minds face-to-face, because in Him we see the One and Only God!