

Prayers without words and Meditation

The reason I have suggested using 'thought prayers', rather than 'word prayers' goes back many years. I was leading a small group in prayer. People had their eyes closed and I glanced over my book at a man passed middle age, and a great stalwart and worker in the Church. I was shocked to see his face with eyes closed but screwed up in a high degree of intensity. My heart went out to him and I wanted to say, "Prayer should not be so painfully tense! Relax; put yourself into your Father's hands. Let's offer to the Lord our love and ask Him to lead us, and promise Him, we shall follow Him gladly.

Christopher Hasler

United Search for Divine Providence



Session 13

The Divine Providence is equally with the evil and with the good.

The Divine Providence is at work in the smallest details everywhere, not only with the good but also the evil: but it is not in their evils! (DP 285-307)

This Session is very challenging, but if you persevere it will enable you to know what exactly "makes you tick". No school of psychology or psychiatry has such deep insights unless it knows something of how the Lord interacts with and sustains our mind. You will be amazed how constant His presence is in your whole being.

Section 1 (287-294) Please begin by reading the whole chapter of Genesis 3 – the story of the Fall. How easy it is to dismiss this story with a quip or some cynicism and move to another subject! After all, there are plenty of things to talk about: Rising prices, sporting results, goings on in Parliament. But this session, more than any other, helps us to step back from our normal, daily sensations and to see what is really going on within us: "I smell a rose and I am delighted with it! This is my sensation and it is real to me; I can analyse it, describe it." And yet, the odour is not our property. It flows in from outside, as does every other sensation, whether of light, music or taste. All of these are the property of things outside of us. Even thoughts, which we believe are entirely our own, flow in from the spiritual world and stimulate our mind. Genesis 3 shows that we are constantly receiving sensations from outside and mostly, they are trying to take control of our life if we give in to them thoughtlessly. We need to understand this and to be on our guard. Even our inner world is

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not our own and we have to learn to recognise the serpent's voice with its alluring promises. And no, it is no good hiding behind a tree, hoping that God will not see us or forget about us!

This is the difficult lesson we need to learn: the Lord is universally present in everything of our mind. Without His constant presence we simply would not be. Angels freely acknowledge this and rejoice in this certainty. Evil spirits deny it completely and believe that their life and thoughts are completely their own. But in a way, that is how the Lord wants us to feel: Free in our body, free in all our sensations and thoughts, because if we realised and felt how completely we depend on the Lord, we would feel enslaved and life would have no real joy in it. Yes, it is something of a contradiction, but try to recognise how quickly our sensations and thoughts can change. As if we moved from one room into another where completely different music is being played. All the time we are at the receiving end of influences from the spiritual world, but we have to choose which to accept or reject.

Section 2 (295-296) A short, but important section on how the hells continually try to control us, mainly by letting us feel that their influences are delightful. Think of pornography – what a hold it can have over some people because it all seems a bit of harmless fun. But if we are addicted to some of these things, and enter the spiritual world, the silken cords of interest become heavy chains which drag us lower and lower. This Session teaches us to recognise the danger and asks us to distance ourselves from such sweet titillations while it is still possible. In fact, we are told that the Lord permits us to be aware of such things, so that we shall reject them before we get addicted!

Section 3 (297-298) This is an important section on **atheism** – very much in evidence in our society, so it is well to study these two numbers carefully to see where the attraction lies. One is to argue that intelligent people can think for themselves, and do not need to listen to silly old stories about fumbling God – whom no one has seen! But we are warned that a person is such as he/she is interiorly. And as we saw, the hells are doing their utmost to involve us in worldly ideas and values. The Lord and the angels influence us towards loving our neighbour and developing spiritual values. This battle will not go away! Hells will always try to lead us towards materialism and selfish and sensuous pleasures.

Section 4 (299-307) Read 299 with care, because this is about your mind and the implications are simply vast! In this Section, I invite you to do some reading in the Word (you may need to take several days over it). If your experience is the same as mine, you may come to the conclusion that although the work we are studying (DP) has some amazingly new insights into the way the Lord's Providence reaches towards us, yet when you turn to the Word itself you may equally explain, "But it is all so clearly described in the Prophets and Psalms!" And somehow, when we understand it, we realise that the Lord's words have their own power, but the Writings help us to understand its personal implications more deeply. So, as an experiment, read Isaiah 55 and note how closely it resembles 299. The Lord has not changed His longing to lead us to heaven in the least. The same desire comes through. A similarly lovely passage is in Jeremiah 29:8-14 in which the false prophets are the atheists of our day.

Read also and meditate on Psalm 139 and Isaiah 40 – you can do this over a period of several days. If you meet in a group, it will be interesting to share your own perceptions of these teachings. The Lord has always spoken to mankind trying to wean them from selfishness (by means of which hell controls us) and lead us towards real freedom.

What comes over very powerfully is this: the Lord "governs" every person in the fullest possible way, whether that person is in heaven or in hell. The Lord never, never gives up on us – read 307. We remain His children, ever residing in His love. But more than anything Session 13, shows us that we should be far more aware of the opportunities the Lord gives us to turn away from evil which holds us in its grip. Even such trivial things as mean or critical attitude towards others play their part on our weakness in turning away from opportunities to do something immoral or dishonest. For young people especially it is hard to go against the stream of present day behaviour and the abuse of drugs and sex. How hard it is at times simply to say, "No thanks!" This Session really probes the heart, and with the voice of the Lord speaking through the Prophets and the Psalmists we should be in no doubt that the Lord lovingly expects a positive response from us – for the sake of our own happiness.