

Prayers without words and Meditation.

Something to be happy about and to smile in your heart! Read Matthew 7:7-11. But this must not be a matter of pride, but true humility. Read Luke 18:9-14 and also Psalms 125-127. Give the Lord wordless thanks.

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United Search for Divine Providence



Session 15

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This Session, more than any other, makes you feel that this is really about you personally : What you are. Why you are. What you always will be. In other words, what you will decide to be.

Paragraph 324:2 deserves to be made into a beautifully illuminated manuscript in large letters, so that we could have it in every home because it is one of the noblest passages in the Writings, nay in the world's Literature, and it is one which every reasonable religion could agree with it. It is the finest insight into the mind of our Creator.

Section 1 (322-324) What could be more important for each one of us than to know that everyone may (and can) be reformed or as we often say 'saved'? And the next important concept is to be assured that there is no such thing as Predestination – meaning, that it has not been preordained where we shall go at the end of our earthly life. This does not mean that the Lord does not know which path we shall freely follow, but the decision will be ours. Everything we do or say today is a step in that direction. That is why we need to examine our thoughts and motives and to see what their quality is. While we are still in this world, we can change the direction in which we are heading.

It is reassuring to read in 322 that civil and moral laws of society do actually point us in the right direction if we learn to obey them. But we

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should obey them not to avoid a fine or a prison sentence, but because we wish to live in harmony with God's laws.

The Purpose of Creation! You certainly can have a wide choice from the materialistic "There is no purpose in creation" to "It is to show the Glory and Majesty of God". These are the two extremes and both are wrong! The real reason is much simpler and corresponds perfectly with our experience. You may ask yourself, "Why did I want to have children?" The real motive is Love, and as the saying goes, 'Love has its reasons!' And there the explanation ends. If you cannot understand this within yourself, no rational explanations will make it any plainer. Love is the sole motive!

Notice the bold statement 324 that Divine Providence is none other than predestination to heaven, meaning that this is the Divine Intention, but this has to be qualified by the fact that every person is born free to choose how to live and how to love. Without freedom, we would be meaningless dolls without any humanity. The truth is that we may not wish to go to heaven and prefer to create our own environment.

I mentioned 324:2 in my introduction. It gives a very clear reason why creation was inevitable. It is due to the nature of Love which desires to communicate its own to others. Without having any 'others' love would grieve in agony and impotence. It is as if a musician had no one to play to, or woman could not have a child. Notice how the deepest questions have the simplest answers, because they proceed from love. Read, think about and also discuss John 12:24-26.

If we do not understand love, we understand nothing at all. Intellectual or purely rational explanations are just around the perimeter, not at the real core of any situation.

Section 2 (325-330) Let us not pretend otherwise: these 13 pages contain the most profound theology on Divine Providence. What it is, how it operates and how it is disposed towards the human race whether good, or evil. It will change our views on Providence and Divine Love. We may have heard many stories about God's anger with the human race, His desire to punish the disobedient, and let's face it we can understand that. In fact, much of the bombing and killing in the world today is done from a mistaken religious fervour. That is very sad since it completely perverts the right understanding of God in people's hearts and minds. Yes, it is often very difficult to understand how God could be so loving, so forgiving

even towards the perpetrators of great cruelties and murders. We may feel this is weakness and even abdication of authority. And yet, on a much smaller scale, I have often noticed that the naughty boy in the family, who is always getting into mischief is, underneath it all, mum's favourite! I do not mean to suggest that God has any favourites, because in the end, He loves us all equally, and towards the evil may feel some sorrow within that love, but never anger or rejection.

In 326 there are 13 subsections and each one has a real gem in it. Let us skim through them, but each one is so valuable and important and goes to the core of our relationship with our heavenly Father. A most useful tip in 326:1-5. In the spiritual world, if we think of anyone with love, we shall have that person's presence with us. Equally if we think about the Lord intellectually, there will be His presence, but if we think of Him with love, there will be conjunction. And of course this also applies in this world. I remember a very earnest man. I was reading a prayer and glanced at him and his face was screwed up so tight! Clearly he was trying to reach the Lord intellectually. I nearly said, "Relax, think of the Lord with love, feel Him near!" But there were others in the room. The New Church prides itself on the marvellous doctrines we have, and rightly so. But we must also learn to love the Lord and perhaps smile a little as we do. We should not be grim when He is close! These paragraphs are constantly bringing us back to the infinite love of God which never changes towards us. This should fill us with happiness. Think of it, feel it: Infinite Love! The only thing that can spoil this is when we sin and act selfishly. Shunning evils is always essential. Especially, when we are in this world where sin is so commonplace. And the message is hammered home constantly: We are entirely at fault, and no one else - if we are not 'saved'. We seem to be so clever at twisting the image of God, into the one into which we were born: one of selfishness and greed.

But equally, the truth is hammered home over and over again: By the Lord everyone has been predestined to heaven and it is our own fault if we choose another path. That is not to say that the right path is easy. Our natural inclinations year for it and we need to overrule them deliberately and follow the path to heaven.