

As we get older we learn about the anxiety of love towards those we love. That is how it is with the Lord's love for us – whoever we are! He goes on reminding us, and in 128 we have an example of this.

Prayer and Reflections

Use passages in 128 and read around them to make them a bit longer and realise the Lord's love and concern for you, as well as His respect and care that you should have the right to choose. If He appears 'nagging' or repetitive, try to sense the love behind it and compare it with your love for your family. Sense the beauty of it and respond with your love to Him. Again, there is no need for words; He understands what you really feel and that is quite enough - your words couldn't do it justice!

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United Search for Divine Providence



Session 5

**A person should remove evils from his life and only then
can the Lord remove evils from a person's inner self.**

The 2nd Law of Divine Providence

– this Session is in 7 subsections (DP 100-128)

An elderly couple moved to a neglected cottage and garden. Both worked very hard, and after 6 months everything looked lovely and the garden was blooming. A vicar went past and said, "How beautiful! It's wonderful what the good Lord can do!" The old man replied, "You should have seen what it was like when He had it on His own."

No, this is not disrespectful; rather it puts in a nutshell the main lesson of this Session. When we work with the Lord, then beautiful things will happen. We need to be pulling out the weeds! Read Matthew 7:15-23 and 23:23-28. Both are important!

1 Every person has an internal and external of thought. (DP 103-105)

This is challenging teaching! We all have an inner, secret self and an outer thought by means of which we communicate with the outside world. We are invited to examine our real, inner feelings and thoughts and compare them with what we say or do in the outer world. Are they the same or are they different? Let this become your inner reflection for this month! Watch yourself to see if your the inner and outer selves differ. Unless we do this, how can we ever possibly improve ourselves?

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2 The quality of our inner thinking dominates the outer. (DP 106-110)

Not an easy section to read, but it gives us an insight into how our mind functions and how the two opposing loves strive for domination: love of others versus love of self. So we are invited to analyse something that is very secret and private. The inner always rules the outer and that is the image we present to the world. Indeed, we ourselves can be beguiled by the outer image and judging by our actions begin to feel we are benevolent and fine people. Hence in 109 we are asked to look deeply into the inner motivation and our outwardly 'generous' personality. What is our real 'end-in-view'? It is well argued in 109 in which we learn that we appoint a sort of Deputy, or Stage Manager, to present us to the outside world as a charming, reliable person even while we are hiding selfish motives. Is this unfair? "Know thyself!" is the answer.

But how marvellous when the inner and outer are in harmony, when the love towards others is as strong as the love of self, since both are necessary for a balanced life.

3 The inner self cannot be purified while the outer is in evils. (DP 111-113)

Clearly, outer evils are an obstruction to any inner change, so these paragraphs may appear discouraging. But let us see them as a celebration of our human ability to change things for the better! We can put many things right so that the Lord can be more immediately present. We can switch off obscene programmes! Be more understanding and forgiving towards 'difficult' neighbours! Be polite to people who are rude! This is a marvellous power given to us by the Lord and is a perfect example that when we act well in our outward life, then the Lord can change things in our inner self. The Lord can't make our garden beautiful if we do not start pulling out the weeds, (see again 107) So, let's get on with it! Read also the Lord's strong words in Luke 13:1-5.

4-6 The Lord can't remove the evils in our life unless we cooperate with Him. (DP 114-122)

For centuries the Christian Church has been caught up in a doctrinal conundrum. Quite rightly it has taught that we should acknowledge and confess our sins, especially before partaking the Holy Supper. On the

other hand, the Church has also taught that our sins have been cleansed by the sacrifice on the cross. The difficulty arose because the Church had divided the Godhead into 3 separate persons and only God the Father can forgive our sins. In Divine Providence it is pointed out that we should look only to the Lord Jesus Christ Who is the incarnate God (Who can only be one) and is the Source of all life and forgiveness. What blocks His forgiveness is not some doctrinal conundrum but purely our own refusal to see our faults and to repent of them. We must make the change happen – that is what this session is all about.

A little warning in 117 explains that many people simply do not know that they are in evils, and therefore leave things alone. Please think deeply about this!

But why go on and on about it? Because our spiritual life depends entirely on our decision to recognise that left to ourselves, we shall remain in our depraved and selfish state and we shall never see the need to do anything about it. Yet what comes through is the realisation that the Lord has complete respect for our freedom of thought and action. It is our responsibility – it is what makes us human and different from the animal kingdom of nature. It is our human potential. Read the Beatitudes with this thought in your mind: Matthew 5:1-12 and verses 43-48; also 6:1-4, 16-18.

7 It is the continual endeavour of the Lord to unite us with Himself, in order to give us the joys of eternal life. (DP 123-128)

This paragraph (123) makes an appeal to our common sense with respect to the belief in God. How could God be three distinct persons? Yet from our own experience and common sense we know that we are a trine of soul, body and activity: thus we are an image of the one personal God and there is no other to whom we can turn.

The next paragraphs 124-127 may seem a bit difficult, but what they teach is that when the Lord approaches us, He never acts separately on a single part of us, but on the whole person. Consider this: when the hells tempt us, they do the opposite and concentrate their efforts on single issues: sex, riches, celebrity status and so on. In these battles we just can't conceive of any consequences of our actions. We must have what we crave! The Lord takes an eternal view and preserves our inner freedom. So much of what He says appears repetitive. It makes me think of a loving mother who keeps 'nagging': "Have you done your homework, brushed your teeth, taken money for the bus?" Oh stop going on, Mum!