

# THE DIVINE INDWELLING

By: William Law

Heaven is as near to our souls as this world is to our bodies; and we are created, we are redeemed, to have our conversation in it. God, the only good of all intelligent natures, is not an absent or distant god, but is more present in and to our souls than our bodies; and we are strangers to Heaven and without God in the world for this only reason, because we are void of that spirit of prayer which alone can and never fails to unite us with the One only Good, and to open Heaven and the kingdom of God within us....

We are all of us by birth the offspring of God--more nearly related to Him than we are to one another, for in Him we live, and move and have our being. The first man that was brought forth from God had the breath and Spirit of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost breathed into him, and so he became a living soul. Thus was our first father born of God, descended from Him, and stood in Paradise in the image and likeness of God. He was the image and likeness of God, not with any regard to his outward shape or form, for no shape has any likeness to God; but he was in the image and likeness of God because the Holy Trinity had breathed their own nature and Spirit into him. And as the Deity, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are always in Heaven and make Heaven to be everywhere, so this Spirit, breathed by them into man, brought Heaven into man along with it; and so man was in Heaven as well as on earth; that is, in Paradise, which signifies an heavenly state or birth of life.

It is manifest that no one can fail of the benefit of Christ's salvation but through an unwillingness to have, and from the same spirit and tempers which made the Jews unwilling to receive it. But if thou wouldst still further know how this great work, the birth of Christ, is to be effected in thee, then let this joyful truth be told thee, that this great work is already begun in every one of us. For this holy Jesus that is to be formed in thee, that is to be the Saviour and new life of

thy soul, that is to rise thee out of the darkness of death into the light of life and give thee power to become a son of God, is already within thee, living, stirring, calling, knocking at the door of thy heart and wanting nothing but thy own faith and good will to have as real a birth and form in thee as He had in the Virgin Mary. For the eternal Word or Son of God did not then first begin to be the Saviour of the world when he was born in Bethlehem of Judea; but that Word which became man in the Virgin Mary did from the beginning of the world enter a word of life, a seed of salvation, into the first father of mankind, was inspoken into him as an ingrafted word under the name and character of a Bruiser of the Serpent's head. Hence it is that Christ said to His disciples "The Kingdom of God is within you"; that is, the divine nature is within you, given unto your first father, into the light of his life, and from him rising up in the life of every son of Adam. Hence also the holy Jesus is said to be the "Light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world". Not as He was born at Bethlehem, not as He had a human form upon earth; in these respects He could not be said to have been the light of every man that cometh into the world; but as He was that eternal Word by which all things, and which had as a second Creator entered again into fallen man as a bruiser of the Serpent; in this respect it was truly said of our Lord when on earth that He was that Light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world. For He was really and truly all this, as He was the Emmanuel, the God with us, given unto Adam and in him to all his offspring. See here the beginning and glorious extent of the Universal Church of Christ; it takes in all the world. It is God's unlimited, universal mercy to all mankind; and every human creature, as sure as he is born of Adam, has a birth of the Bruiser of the Serpent within him, and so is infallible in covenant with God through Jesus Christ. Hence also it is that the holy Jesus is appointed to be Judge of all the world; it is because all mankind, all nations and languages have in Him and through Him been put into covenant with God and made capable of resisting the evil of their fallen nature.

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Poor sinner! consider the treasure thou hast within thee; the Saviour of the world, the eternal Word of God lies hid in thee; the Saviour of the world, the eternal Word of God lies hid in thee, as a spark of the divine nature which is to overcome sin and death and hell within thee, and generate the life of Heaven again in thy soul. Turn to thy heart, and thy heart will find its Saviour, its God within itself. Thou seest, hearest, and feelest nothing of God, because thou seekest for Him abroad with thy outward eyes, thou seekest for Him in books, in controversies, in the church and outward exercises, but there thou wilt not find Him till thou hast first found Him in thy heart. Seek for Him in thy heart, and thou wilt never seek in vain, for there He dwells, there is the seat of His Light and holy Spirit.

For this turning to the light and Spirit of God within thee is thy only true turning unto God; there is no other way of finding Him but in that place where He dwelleth in thee. For though God be everywhere present, yet He is only present to thee in the deepest and most central part of thy soul. Thy natural senses cannot possess God or unite thee to Him; nay, thy inward faculties of understanding, will, and memory can only reach after God, but cannot be the place of His habitation in thee. But there is a root or depth in thee of His habitation in thee from whence all these faculties come forth, as lines from a centre or as branches from the body of the tree. This depth is call the centre, the *fund* or bottom of the soul. This depth is the unity, the eternity, I had almost said the infinity of thy soul; for it is so infinite that nothing can satisfy it or give it any rest but the infinity of God. In this depth of the soul the Holy Trinity brought forth its own living image in the first created man, bearing in himself a living representation of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and this was his dwelling in God and God in him. This was the kingdom of god within him and made Paradise without him. But the day he absolutely died to this kingdom of God within him. This depth or centre of his soul having lost its God, was shut up in death and darkness and became a prisoner in an earthly animal that only excelled

its brethren, the beast, in an upright form and serpentine subtlety. Thus ended the fall of man. But from that moment that the God of mercy inspoke into Adam the Bruiser of the Serpent, from that moment all the riches and treasures of the divine nature came again into man, as a seed of salvation sown into the centre of the soul, and only lies hidden there in every man till he desires to rise from his fallen state and to be born again from above.

Awake, then, thou that sleepest, and Christ, who from all eternity has been espoused to thy soul, shall give thee light. Begin to search and dig in thine own field for this pearl of eternity that lies hidden in it; it cannot cost thee too much, nor canst thou buy it too dear, for it is all; and when thou has found it thou wilt know that all which thou hast sold or given away for it is as mere a nothing as a bubble upon the water.

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See here in short the state of man as redeemed. He has a spark of the light and Spirit of God as a supernatural gift of God given into the birth of his soul, to bring forth by degrees a new birth of that life which was lost in Paradise. This holy spark of the divine nature within him has a natural, strong, and almost infinite tendency or reaching after that eternal light and Spirit of God from whence it came forth. It came forth from God, it came out of God, it partaketh of the divine nature, and therefore it is always in a state of tendency and return to God. And all this is called the breathing, the moving, the quickening of the Holy Spirit within us, which are so many operations of this spark of life tending towards God. On the other hand, the Deity as considered in itself and without man unites and communicates its riches and virtues to the spirit of the air that is within man. This love or desire of God towards the soul of man is so great that He gave His only begotten Son, the brightness of His glory, to take the human nature upon Him in its fallen state, that by this mysterious union of God and man all the enemies of the soul of man might be overcome and

every human creature might have a power of being born again according to that image of God in which he was first created. The Gospel is the history of this love of God to man. Inwardly he has a seed of the divine life given into the birth of his soul, a seed that has all the riches of eternity in it and is always wanting to come to the birth in him and be alive in God. Outwardly he has Jesus Christ, who as a sun in the firmament is always doing to the vegetable seeds in the earth...But here let it be well observed that this desire on both sides cannot have its effect till the husk and gross part of the grain falls into a state of corruption and death; till this begins, the mystery of life hidden in it cannot come forth.

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This pearl of eternity is the Church or Temple of God within thee, the consecrated place of divine worship, where alone thou canst worship God in spirit and in truth. In spirit, because thy spirit is that alone in thee, which can unite and cleave unto God and receive the workings of His divine Spirit upon thee. In truth, because this adoration in spirit is that truth and reality, of which all outward forms and rites, though instituted by God, are only the figure for a time; but this worship is eternal. Accustom thyself to the holy service of this inward temple. In the midst of it is the fountain of living water, of which thou mayest drink and live for ever. There the mysteries of thy redemption are celebrated, or rather opened in life and power. There the supper of the Lamb is kept; the bread that came down from Heaven, that giveth life to the world, is thy true nourishment: all is done and known in real experience, in a living sensibility of the work of God on the soul, which has followed Christ in the regeneration. When once thou art well grounded in this inward worship, thou wilt have learnt to live unto God above time and place. For every day will be Sunday to thee, and wherever thou goest thou wilt have a priest, a church, and an altar along with thee. For

when God has all that He should have of thy heart, when renouncing the will, judgement, tempers and inclinations of thy old man, thou art wholly given up to the obedience of the light and spirit of God within thee, to will only in His will, to love only in His love, to be wise only in His wisdom, then it is that everything thou doest is as a song of praise and the common business of thy life is a conforming to God's will on earth as angles do in Heaven.

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Now there is but one possible way for man to attain this salvation or life of God in the soul. There is not one for the Jew, another for a Christian, and a third for the heathen. No; God is one, human nature is one, salvation is one, and the way to it is one; and that is, the desire of the soul turned to God. When this desire is alive and breaks forth in any creature under Heaven, then the lost sheep is found and the shepherd has it upon his shoulders. Through this desire the poor Prodigal Son leaves his husks and swine and hastens to his father; it is because of this desire that the father sees the son while yet afar off, that he runs out to meet him, falls on his neck and kisses. See here how plainly we are taught that no sooner is this desire arisen and in motion towards God, but the operation of God's Spirit answers to it, cherishes and welcomes its first beginnings---signified by the father's seeing and having compassion on his son whilst yet afar off, that is, in the first beginnings of his desire. Thus does this desire do all, it brings the soul to God and God into the soul, it unites with God, it cooperates with God, and is one life with God. Suppose this desire not to be alive, not in motion, either in a Jew or a Christian, and then all the sacrifices, the service, the worship either of the Law or the Gospel are but dead works that bring no life into the soul nor beget any union between God and it. Suppose this desire to be awakened and fixed upon God, though in souls that never heard either of the Law or Gospel, and then the divine life or operation of God enters

into them, and the new birth in Christ is formed in those who never heard of His name. and these are they "that shall come from the East, and from the West, and sit down with Abraham and Isaac in the Kingdom of God"....

When, therefore, the first spark of a desire after God arises in thy soul, cherish it with all thy care, give all thy heart into it, it is nothing less than a touch of the divine loadstone that is to draw thee out of the vanity of time into the riches of eternity. Get up, therefore, and follow it as gladly as the wise Men of the East followed the star from Heaven that appeared to them. It will do for thee as the star did for them: it will lead thee to the birth of Jesus, not in a stable at Bethlehem in Judea, but to the birth of Jesus in the dark centre of thy own fallen soul.