

THE PEARL OF ETERNITY

By: William Law

The goodness of God breaking forth into a desire to communicate good was the cause and the beginning of the Creation. Hence it follows, that to all eternity, God can have no thought, or intent toward the creature, but to communicate good; because He made the creature for this sole end, to receive good.

The first motive toward the creature is unchangeable; it takes its rise from God's desire to communicate good; and it is an eternal impossibility that anything can ever come from God as His Will and purpose towards the creature, but that same love and goodness, which first created it: He must always well that to it, which He willed at the creation of it.

This is the amiable nature of God. He is good, the unchangeable, overflowing fountain of good, that sends forth nothing but good to all eternity. He is the love itself, the unmixed, immeasurable love, doing nothing but from love, to every thing that He has made; requiring nothing of all His creature but the Spirit and fruits of that love, which brought them into being.

Oh, how sweet is this contemplation of the riches of divine love! With what attraction must it draw every thoughtful man, to return love for love to this overflowing fountain of boundless goodness? What charms has that religion which discovers to us our existence in, relation to, and dependence upon this ocean of divine love! View every part of our redemption, from Adam's first sin to the resurrection of the dead, and you will find nothing but successive mysteries of that first love, which created angels and men. All the mysteries of the Gospel are only so many marks and proofs of God's desiring to make His love triumph, in the removal of sin and disorder from all nature and creature.

Wherever you go, whatever you do, at home, or abroad, in the field, or at church, do all in a desire of union with Christ...and look

upon all as nothing but that which exercises and increases the spirit and life of Christ in your soul. From morning to night keep Jesus in your heart, long for nothing, desire nothing, hope for nothing, but to have all that is within you changed into the Spirit and temper of the Holy Jesus. Let this be your Christianity, your church and your religion.

For this new birth in Christ thus firmly believed, and continually desired, will do everything that you want to have done in you. It will dry up all the springs of vice, stop all the workings of evil in you, it will bring all that is good into you, it will open all the Gospel within you, and you will know what it is to be taught of God. This longing desire of your heart to be one with Christ will soon put a stop to all the vanity of your life, and nothing will be admitted to enter into your heart or proceed from it but what comes from God and returns to God: you will soon be, as it were, tied and bound in the chains of all holy affections and desires, your mouth will have a watch set upon it, your ears would willingly hear nothing that does not tend to God, nor your eyes be open but to see and find occasions of doing good.

In a word, when this faith has got both your head and your heart, it will then be with you as with the merchant who found a pearl of great price; it will make you gladly to sell all that you have, and buy it. For all that had seized and possessed the heart of any man, whatever the merchant of this world had got together, whether of riches, power, honor, learning, or reputation, loses all this value, is counted but as doing, and willingly parted with, as soon as this glorious pearl, the new birth in Christ Jesus, is discovered and found by him.

This pearl of eternity, **first of all**, is the Light and Spirit of God within you, which has hitherto done you but little good, because all the desire of your heart has been after the light and spirit of this world. Your reason and senses, your heart and passions, have turned all their attention to the poor concerns of this life, and you are a stranger to this principal of heaven, this riches of eternity within you. For God is not--cannot be--truly found by any worshippers but those who worship Him in Spirit and in truth; so this light and Spirit, though always within us, cannot be found, felt, or enjoyed, but by those whose whole spirit is turned to it.

Secondly, this pearl of eternity is the wisdom and love of God within you. In this pearl of the serpent bruiser, all the Holy nature, Spirit, tempers, and inclinations of Christ, lie as in a seed in the center of your soul. Divine wisdom and heavenly love will grow up in you, if you give but true attention to God present in your soul. Such only are priest and prophets--those who have God in themselves. Hence, there have been in all ages, even among the most illiterate, both men and women who have attained to a deep understanding of the mysteries of the wisdom and love of God in Christ Jesus. It is not art or science or skill in logic, but the opening of the divine life in the soul that can give true understanding of the things of God.

Thirdly, this pearl of eternity is the church, or temple of God within you, the consecrated place of divine worship, where alone you can worship God in Spirit and in truth. In Spirit, because your spirit is that alone in you which can be united and cleave unto God, and receive the working of His divine Spirit upon you. In truth, because this adoration in Spirit is that truth and reality of which all outward forms and rites, though instituted of God, are only the figure for a time. But this worship is eternal. Accustom yourself to the holy service of this inward temple. In the midst of it is the fountain of living water, of which you may drink and live forever. There the mysteries of your 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 gives life to the world, is done, and known in real experience, in a living sensibility of the work of God on the soul. When once you are well grounded in this inward worship, you will have learned to live unto God above time and place. For every day will be Sunday to you, and wherever you go you will have a priest, a church, and an altar along with you.

Fourthly, this pearl of eternity is the peace and joy of God within you. But this can only be found by the manifestation of the life and power of Jesus Christ in your soul. Be where you will, either here or there, if you live to your own will, to the pleasure of your lusts, appetites, senses and passions, and in conformity to the vain customs and spirit of this world, you are dead while you live--the seed of the woman is crucified within you, Christ can profit you nothing, you are a stranger to all that is holy and heavenly within

you, and utterly incapable of finding the peace and joy of God in your soul.

How can you discover this riches of eternity treasured up within you? All depends upon your right submission and obedience to this speaking of Go in your soul. Stop therefore all self-activity, listen not to the suggestion of your own reason, run not on in your own will, but be retired, silent, passive and humble attentive to this new risen Light within you.

Open your heart, your eyes and ears t all its impression. Let it enlighten, teach, frighten, torment, judge, and condemn you as it pleases. Turn not away from it, hear all it says, seed for no relief out of it, consult not with flesh and blood, but with a heart full of faith and resignation to God, pray only this prayer: that God's kingdom may come, and His will be done in your soul. Stand faithfully in this state of preparation, thus given up to the Spirit of God, and then the work of your repentance will be wrought in God, and you will soon find that He that is in you is much greater that all that is against you.

Adapted from the Spirit of Prayer, by William Law.