

The Life of God in the Soul of Man – Lesson 5

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The Excellency of Divine Love

_____ is defined as *“that powerful and prevalent passion by which all the faculties and inclinations of the soul are determined and on which both its perfection and happiness depend.”*

What we love impacts _____ about us. Our lives are driven by and conform to what we love.

“The worth and excellency of a soul is to be measured by the object of its love. He who loveth mean and sordid things thereby become base and vile, but a noble and well-placed affection doth advance and improve the spirit into conformity with the perfections which it loves. The images of these do frequently present themselves unto the mind, and, by a secret force and energy, insinuate into the very constitution of the soul and mold and fashion it unto their own likeness.”

If we supremely love that which is _____ (not perfect) we will be made more and more crooked.

“But now, as all the creatures we converse with have their mixture and alloy, we are always in hazard to be sullied and corrupted by placing our affection on them. Passion doth easily blind our eyes, so that we first approve and then imitate the things that are blamable in them.”

The only way for us to improve our souls is to supremely love that which is _____.

“The true way to improve and ennoble our souls is by fixing our love on the divine perfections that we may have them always before us and derive an impression of them on ourselves, and beholding with open face, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, we may be changed into the same image, from glory to glory.”

The greatest thing we possess is love, therefore, we should bestow it upon that which is truly _____.

“Love is the greatest and most excellent thing we are masters of, and therefore it is folly and baseness to bestow it unworthily. It is indeed the only thing we can call our own. Other things may be taken from us by violence, but none can ravish our love.”

When we give our love to another, we are giving that which is most dear and valuable to us. We are, by giving our love, giving _____.

“It is not possible to refuse him anything, to whom by love we have given ourselves...Those unlimited submissions, which would debase the soul if directed to any other, will exalt and ennoble it when placed here. Those chains and cords of love are infinitely more glorious than liberty itself; this slavery is more noble than all the empires in the world.”

Divine love is the only thing that can make the soul truly _____.

“As divine love doth advance and elevate the soul, so it is that alone which can make it happy. The highest and most ravishing pleasure, the most solid and substantial delights that human nature is capable of, are those which arise from the endearments of a well-placed and successful affection.”

If we are only happy when our love is set on that which is divine, then when we set our love on anything else it is bound to _____ and trouble us.

If you love an object that is _____ of love you will feel the sting of misery and know the trouble of a disquieted spirit.

“So eager and violent a passion cannot but fret and torment the spirit where it finds not wherewith to satisfy its cravings. And, indeed, so large and unbounded is its nature that it must be extremely pinched and straitened when confined to any creature; nothing below an infinite good can afford it room to stretch itself and exert its vigor and activity. What is a little skin-deep beauty, or some small degree of goodness, to match or satisfy a passion which was made for God, designed to embrace an infinite good?”

If you love an object that does not offer a suitable _____ for your love you will feel dissatisfaction, despair, or even anger.

“Love is the most valuable thing we can bestow, and by giving it, we do in effect give all that we have; and therefore it needs must be afflicting to find so great a gift despised, that the present which one hath made of his whole heart cannot prevail to obtain any return...Nothing can be more clear than that the happiness of love depends on the return it meets with. And herein the divine lover hath unspeakably the advantage, having placed his affection on Him who nature is love; whose goodness is infinite as His being; whose mercy prevented us when we were His enemies, and therefore cannot choose but embrace us when we are become His friends.”

If you love an object that you cannot _____ with it will lead to misery.

“Another thing which disturbs the pleasure of love, and renders it a miserable and unquiet passion, is absence and separation from those we love...But oh how happy are those who have placed their love on Him who can never be absent from them!”

If you love that which is _____ you will be miserable.

“In fine, a lover is miserable if the person whom he loveth be so. They who have made an exchange of hearts by love get thereby an interest in one another’s happiness and misery, and this makes love a troublesome passion when placed on earth...But if God were the object of our love, we should share in an infinite happiness without any mixture or possibility of diminution.”

He who loves God will find _____ in all of life.

“A person molded into this temper would find pleasure in all the dispensations of providence.”

He who loves God will find the _____ of religion sweet to him.

“The exercises of religion, which to others are insipid and tedious, do yield the highest pleasure and delight to souls possessed with divine love.”