

From the Journal of John Woolman (1720 – 1772)

Universality

“There is a principle which is pure, placed in the human mind, which in different places and ages hath had different names. It is, however, pure and proceeds from God. It is deep and inward, confined to no forms of religion nor excluded from any, where the heart stands in perfect sincerity. In whomsoever this takes root and grows, of what nation soever, they become brethren in the best sense of the expression.”

I was early convinced in my mind that true religion consisted in an inward life, wherein the heart doth love and reverence God the Creator, and learns to exercise true justice and goodness, not only toward all men, but also toward the brute creatures; that as the mind was moved by an inward principal to love God as an invisible incomprehensible being, so by the same principal, it was moved to love him in all his manifestations in the visible world; To say we love God and at the same time exercise cruelty toward the least creature derived from him was a contradiction in itself. I found no narrowness respecting sects and opinions, but believed that sincere, upright-hearted people in every society, who truly love God, were accepted of him.

Five Questions

1. What is the author’s main point in this passage? **This question gets at what the author's point is, not what you would like it to be.** (Main Point)
2. What new light do I find in this particular reading of this passage of text? **New light may be great or small.** (New Light)
3. How is this passage true **or not true** to my experience? (Truth)
4. What are the implications of this passage for my life? (Implications)
5. What problems do I have with this passage? (Problems)