David Morse -- American missionary to India -- became great friends there with the Pearl-diver, Rambhau. *Many an evening* he spent in Rambhau's cabin reading to him from the Bible, and explaining to him God's way of salvation.

Rambhau enjoyed listening to the Word of God, but whenever the missionary tried to get Rambhau to accept Christ as his Savior -- he would shake his head and reply, "Your Christian way to heaven is too easy for me! I cannot accept it. If ever I should find admittance to heaven in that manner -- I would feel like a *pauper* there.-.like a beggar who has been let in out of pity. I may be proud -- but I want to deserve, I want to earn my place in heaven -- and so I am going to work for it."

Nothing the missionary could say seemed to have any effect on Rambhau's decision, and so quite a few years slipped by. One evening, however, the missionary heard a knock on his door, and on going to open it he found Rambhau there. “Come in, dear friend," said Morse.

"No," said the pearl-diver. "I want you to come with me to my house for a short time -- I have something to show you. Please do not say No". "Of course I'll come," replied the missionary. As they neared his house, Rambhau said: "In a week's time I start working for my place in heaven; I am leaving for Delhi -- and I am going there on my knees." "Man, you're crazy! It's nine hundred miles to Delhi, and the skin will break on your knees, and you will have blood-poisoning or leprosy before you get to Bombay."

"No, I must get to Delhi," *affirmed* Rambhau, "and the *immortals* will reward me for it! The suffering will be sweet -- for it will purchase heaven for me!" "Rambhau, my friend -- you can't. How can I bear you to do it -- when Jesus Christ has suffered and died to purchase heaven for you!"

But the old man could not be moved. "You are my dearest friend on earth. Through all these years you have stood by me in sickness, in want -- you have been sometimes my only friend. But even you cannot turn me from my desire to purchase eternal bliss....I must go to Delhi!" Inside the hut, Morse was seated in the very chair Rambhau had specially built for him -- where on so many occasions he had read to him the Bible.

Rambhau left the room to return soon with a small but heavy box. "I have had this box for years," said he, "and I keep only one thing in it. Now I will tell you about it. I once had a son..." "A son! Why, Rambhau, you have never before said a word about him!" "No, I couldn't." Even as he spoke the diver's *eyes were moistened.*

"Now I must tell you, for soon I will leave, and who knows whether I shall ever return? My son was a diver too. He was the best pearl diver on the coasts of India. He had the *swiftest* dive, the *keenest* eye, the strongest arm, the longest breath of any man who ever sought for pearls.

What joy he brought to me! Most pearls, as you know, have some *defect* or *blemish* only the expert can discern, but my boy always dreamed of finding the 'perfect' pearl -- one beyond all that was ever found. "One day he found it! But even when he saw it -- he had been under water too long.... That pearl cost him his life, for he died soon after."

The old pearl diver *bowed* his head. For a moment his whole body *shook*, but there was no sound. "All these years," he continued, "I have kept this pearl -- but now I am going, not to return, and to you, my best friend -- I am giving my pearl."

The old man worked the combination on the box and drew from it a carefully wrapped package. Gently opening the cotton, he picked up a *mammoth* pearl and placed it in the hand of the missionary. It was one of the largest pearls ever found off the coast of India, and glowed with a *luster* and brilliance never seen in *cultured* pearls. It would have brought a *fabulous sum* in any market.

For a moment the missionary was speechless and gazed with *awe*. "Rambhau! What a pearl!" "That pearl, is perfect," replied the Indian quietly. The missionary looked up quickly with a new thought: Was not this the very opportunity and occasion he had prayed for -- to make Rambhau understand the value of Christ's sacrifice? So he said, "Rambhau, this is a wonderful pearl, an amazing pearl. Let me buy it. I would give you ten thousand dollars for it."

What do you mean?" "Well, I will give you fifteen thousand dollars for it, or if it takes more -- I will work for it." "This pearl is beyond price. No man in all the world has money enough to pay what this pearl is worth to me. On the market a million dollars could not buy it. I will not sell it to you. You may only have it as a gift."

"No, Rambhau, I cannot accept that. As much as I want the pearl, I cannot accept it that way. Perhaps I am proud, but that is too easy. I must pay for it, or work for it..."

The old pearl-diver was *stunned.* "You don't understand at all, Don't you see? My only son gave his life to get this pearl, and I wouldn't sell it for any money. Its worth is in the life-blood of my son. I cannot sell this -- but I can give it to you. Just accept it in *token* of the love I bear you."

The missionary was choked, and for a moment could not speak. Then he gripped the hand of the old man. "Rambhau," he said in a low voice, "don't you see? My words are just what you have been saying to God all the time." The diver looked long and searchingly at the missionary, and slowly, slowly he began to understand. "God is offering to you salvation as a free gift," said the missionary. "It is so great and priceless that no man on earth can buy it. Millions of dollars are too little. No man on earth could earn it. His life would be millions of years too short. No man is good enough to deserve it. It cost God the life-blood of His only Son to make the entrance for you into heaven. In a million years, in a hundred pilgrimages, you could not earn that entrance. All you can do is to accept it as a token of God's love for you -- a sinner

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"Rambhau, of course I will accept the pearl in deep humility, praying God I may be worthy of your love. Rambhau, won't you accept God's great gift of heaven, too, in deep humility, knowing it cost Him the death of His Son to offer it to you?"

Great tears were now rolling down the cheeks of the old man. The *veil* was beginning to lift." I see it now. I have believed in the doctrine of Jesus for the last two years, but I could not believe that His salvation was free. Now I understand. Some things are too priceless to be bought or earned. I will accept His salvation!"