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DO YOU LOVE GOD?

“By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and practice his commandments.” 1 Jno. 5:2 Diaglott

This does not read as is generally supposed; it does not say we know that we love God because we love his children, but almost the reverse: We love the children because we love the Father. In a word, it is through our relationship and union with our Head, Jesus, that we are permitted to partake of the spirit or mind of the Father, and that spirit is the spirit of Love—love toward all that is good and noble and pure and just, and consequently, *hatred* of all that is impure, sinful, and opposed to the things loved—“hating iniquity”—loving righteousness.

If then you love God and have become a partaker of His spirit, (“Let the same *mind* [spirit] be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, our Lord”)—“if the spirit of Christ dwell in you,” you will love all things in which there is *any good* and hate all evil, because it is opposed to good. And not only so, but as John expresses it, if we are entirely surrendered to God and to obedience to his will, those to whom we will be especially drawn and whom we will especially *love* will be those who are begotten of the same spirit—who also love righteousness and hate iniquity.

How you have proved this in your own experience: You met a stranger and before you were aware you were acquainted; you recognized in each other the spirit of Christ and not the spirit of the world, and this was the basis of fellowship. But how shall we know whether the ones you love are the children of God or not? Perhaps you love worldly people, or perhaps you love moral people who are not *new creatures*, best. How can you tell? By the Apostle’s rule: “By this we know that we love the children of God”—if we love God supremely.

But does some one say: “How can I know that I *love* God supremely?” We have heard dear Christians pray: “Oh, Lord *help* me to love thee,” and we remember a sweet hymn which says: “*Let* me love thee.” And we wish that all who are the Lord’s might realize that love to him is not a *gift* to be prayed for, and not a thing which is given to us, but a thing which we ourselves must develop. The basis of all love for any person or thing is knowledge. You can only learn to love good and hate evil by becoming acquainted with them; so the way by which we come to love God is by becoming acquainted with him. We cannot become *personally* acquainted with him, for no man

hath seen God, but we can and do become acquainted with his spirit—his mind—as we see it manifested in Christ Jesus, our Lord, and through the apostles, and through those who are entirely consecrated to him now living in the world. And the more we see of his spirit—its *meekness, patience, long-suffering, charity—love*, the more we come to *love* Him who is the fount or source of all this—for we realize that God is love.

Nor is this the only way we can

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learn of God’s spirit, for as we look into His Word, (having come into harmony with him and consecrated ourselves to him) the spirit of God is more and more revealed to us as we come to see his great and loving plans therein recorded; and the more we see of perfection and beauty and love in the plan, the more we will admire and love the great planner—our Father. God desires all his creatures to become acquainted with him (and in due time will cause “the *knowledge* of the Lord to fill the whole earth,” in order that all may have an opportunity to *love* him—“for his mercy endureth forever”) but now during this “present evil world,” or time while evil is allowed to reign, he is revealing himself only to those who have eyes to see and ears to hear, *and who use them*. If then we would love, we must know God; if we would know, we must make use of the instrumentality and search the Scriptures for his plan and will, and *seek* to know what is “that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.” “Then shall we know if we follow on to know the Lord.”

In the verse following the one above considered, the apostle lays down a rule by which we may know whether we really *love* God or not, viz.: “For this is the love of God: that we keep his commandments, and his commandments are *not* burdensome.”

Are you in the Lord’s hands—are you seeking to do his will? If so, what motives actuate you—*love*, or *fear*? If fear, your service will be a drudge; you may perform, but it will be a *burden* and a continuous effort to render obedience to his wishes. If you serve God from *love* your experience will be different—it will be a pleasure to do his will; a

“Joy to find in every station
Something still to do or bear”—

a pleasure to sacrifice earthly comforts or pleasures whenever his will thus indicates.

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How simple and yet how absolute is this test of whether and how much we *love* God or fear him! If we *fear* we may obey and find it burdensome, but if we *love* him we keep his commands and do not find them *burdensome*.

Oh, how often has this *burdensome obedience* to God been brought to our notice! Some one whom we had supposed was serving the Lord in loving obedience begins to tell us how much he suffers for Christ's sake, and how much he bears of the *burden* and heat of the day laboring in the vineyard. No, if we have the spirit of Christ, we will not feel the commands of our Father burdensome, but a *pleasant* service, and it will be true of us as of him: "I *delight* to do thy will, O God."

If then the doing of the will of God be unpleasant to us, if it be not with us as with Paul, that the sacrifices of earthly things—earthly wealth, influence, pleasures, are a privilege and a joy, it must be because we lack the *love of God*, which constrained Paul and all the apostles to reckon all these things and life itself but loss and dross, on account of the knowledge of the anointed Jesus, our Lord, on whose account we suffer the loss of all things and *consider them to be vile refuse*, so that we may gain Christ. (Phil. 3:8.)

Come then, you who *labor*, you who are *burdened* in the Lord's service, come to Him who speaks, saying: "Come unto me, ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." (Matt. 11:28) Come, receive of his spirit of entire consecration. Then you can with him say: "I *delight* to do thy will, O God." Thus we will know that our obedience is from *love* of God—if his will is not burdensome, but a delight to us.

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