

Light and Love

by W.R. Inge

A Godlike man is one who is illuminated by the Divine Light and kindled by the Divine Love, and this is only possible when knowledge is accompanied by love.

Scripture: Proverbs 8:17, John 14:21, Romans 13:10, 1 Corinthians 13:2, 1 John 4:8

Topics: "Divine Nature", "Eternal Love"

Description

W.R. Inge preaches about the essence of becoming a Godlike man and a partaker of the Divine nature, emphasizing that being illuminated by eternal Light and consumed by eternal Love is key. Knowledge without love is futile; one must love virtue to truly embody it, love justice to be just, and love truth to be true. In the absence of love, even great knowledge and light are meaningless, as seen in the case of the Evil One. Love, when combined with knowledge, leads one to cleave to God, forsake all that is not from God, and unite with Him in an inseparable bond.

Transcript

It may be asked, What is it like to be a partaker of the Divine nature, or a Godlike man? The answer is, that he who is steeped in, or illuminated by, the eternal and Divine Light, and kindled or consumed by the eternal and Divine Love, is a Godlike man and a partaker of the Divine nature. But this light or knowledge is of no avail without love. You may understand this if you remember that a man who knows very well the difference between virtue and wickedness, but does not love virtue, is not virtuous, in that he obeys vice.

But he who loves virtue follows after it, and his love makes him an enemy to wickedness, so that he will not perform any wicked act and hates wickedness in others; and he loves virtue so that he would not leave any virtue unperformed even if he had the choice, not for the sake of reward, but from love of virtue. To such a man virtue brings its own reward, and he is content with it, and would part with it for no riches. Such a man is already virtuous, or in the way to become so.

And the truly virtuous man would not cease to be so to gain the whole world. He would rather die miserably. The case of justice is the same. Many men know well what is just and unjust, but yet neither are nor ever will be just men. For they love not justice, and therefore practise wickedness and injustice. If a man loved justice, he would do no unjust deed; he would feel so great abhorrence and anger against injustice whenever he saw it that he would be willing to do and suffer anything in order to put an end to injustice, and that men might be made just.

He would rather die than commit an injustice, and all for love of justice. To him, justice brings her own reward, she rewards him with herself, and so the just man would rather die a thousand deaths than live as an unjust man. The same may be said of truth. A man may know very well what is truth or a lie, but if he loves not the truth, he is not a true man. If, however, he loves it, it is with truth as with justice. And of justice Isaiah speaks in the fifth chapter: "Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil, that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter."

Thus we may understand that knowledge and light avail nothing without love. We see the truth of this in the case of the Evil One. He perceives and knows good and evil, right and wrong: but since he has no love for the good that he sees, he becomes not good. It is true indeed that Love must be led and instructed by knowledge, but if knowledge is not followed by Love, it will be of no avail. So also with God and Divine things. Although a man know much about God and Divine things, and even dream that he sees and understands what God Himself is, yet if he have not Love, he will never become like God or a partaker of the Divine nature.

But if Love be added to his knowledge, he cannot help cleaving to God, and forsaking all that is not God or from God, and hating it and fighting with it, and finding it a cross and burden. And this Love so unites a man to God, that he can never again be separated from Him. xli.

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/wr-inge/light-and-love/>

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