

# "And This is Love"



## The Second and Third Letters of John The Apostle

"And this is love: that we walk in obedience to his commands. As you have heard from the beginning, his command is that you walk in love." —II John 1:6

### "The Friends Here" III John 9-14

"Dignity never savors of artificiality or affectation. It never struts or poses. Dignity never struggles to be dignified. The man of inborn and natural dignity has too much respect for his dignity to stand upon it. He who is inordinately anxious to appear dignified usually walks on stilts to make himself seem bigger than he really is."—F. W. Boreham



#### I. THE DIOTREPES DILEMMA (vs. 9, 10)

- A. The bad man, "nurtured by Zeus", driven by ambition (v. 9)
- B. Sad by-products of a one-man ministry (v. 10)

"Authority intoxicates, And makes mere sots of magistrates; The fumes of it invade the brain, And make men giddy, proud, and vain."—Samuel Butler (1612-1680)

#### II. THE DYNAMIC FOR GOODNESS (v. 11)

- A. The good man—the test of what is good.
- B. "What is evil"—unable to replicate good, unwilling to yield to God.
  - 1. "Imitate", from *mim'eoh*, as in *mime*, to follow the example of.

"One does not surrender a life in an instant. That which is lifelong can only be surrendered in a lifetime."—Jim Elliot

#### III. THE DEMETRIUS DISTINCTION (v. 12)

- A. The honored man—a testimony and lifestyle based in truth. (*Demetrius*, from *Demeter*)
- B. The influence and reputation of Godliness.
  - 1. "Well spoken" means to bear witness (Greek, *martu'reoh*, as in *martyr*)

"Goodness is not tied to greatness, but greatness is tied to goodness."—Greek Proverb

#### IV. THE DETERMINATION FOR DIALOGUE (vs. 13, 14)

- A. The personal limitations of the letter (v. 13)
- B. The practical communication dynamics of personal dialogue (v.14)

"You cannot say that you are friendless when Christ has said, 'Henceforth I call you not servants ... but I have called you friends.'"—Billy Graham

#### **FOR THOUGHT, DISCUSSION, and APPLICATION...**

1. Apostle John's third epistle deals directly with three men—*Gaius* (vs. 1-8), *Diotrephes*, and *Demetrius*. How would you summarize the Diotrephes dilemma? What was the root of his problem? Do you think that he was a Christian?
2. Why would such opposition arise and assault the ministry of Christ's apostles? Can, and does, the same occur today among believers? What are some means to avoid clerical dictatorships?
3. Verse 11, regarding imitation, may at first appear as a call to trying to live life on the basis of "What Would Jesus Do?" And Thomas a Kempis' classic is titled "The Imitation of Christ". Do you think that the text means to exactly duplicate Jesus' lifestyle?
4. Honorable Demetrius was praised by all the people in the church. He is also said to have been commended "by the truth itself". Discuss the meaning of *spiritual reputation*. How important is it to be sought after?
5. John writes a sensitive statement of desire to meet the people of Gaius' church on a personal basis. What are the advantages of face-to-face counsel and instruction? Can't truth and teaching, as some suggest, be acquired from books, television, the internet, meditating in solitude? Is preaching becoming obsolete?
6. If you were *Gaius*, to whom John's letter was addressed, how would you respond to it? How do you respond to it?