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One of the most quoted New Testament texts is this from John: "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." (John 3:16.)

It is comfortingly familiar—the love of God simply stated—and what he did about his love is the evidence of it: He sent his Only Begotten Son that whoso believeth in him should have everlasting life.

Love is expressed by action

Suppose God had loved the world in a passive way? Suppose he hadn't sent his Son? Suppose he hadn't given us his gospel? Suppose he hadn't set out to save mankind or redeem us from death? Suppose he had let his children drift without plan or purpose or counsel or commandments? Would that have been love?

The point I hope to make, for a particular purpose, is the evidence, the proof, the test of love.

An editorial recently read in a medical magazine had an intriguing title: "Love Is a Verb." And from this the writer turned his attention to the importance of doing, of proving, of performing. The proof of any principle is what it does, and the proof of any person is what he does—how he acts, what he becomes—not simply what he says.

"Love Is a Verb."

We might paraphrase and say that service is a verb, that life is a verb; for it is in doing, in living, in learning, and not just in words that we perform our purpose. No one really proves himself or his principles in neutrality or indifference or inaction. No one proves himself by merely thinking or simply sitting.

The writer of the article referred to above said that in some primitive languages, with their fewness of words, the description of the movement of game, for example, is described simply

by one word; *running*. Perhaps we could say much more with fewer words by simply indicating the action: *living, doing*. "... when a noun replaces a verb there is a disadvantage . . ." because a noun is static, and life is movement. Some people "assign an intrinsic value to 'things' like purity and gratitude. . . . They take credit for possessing nominal virtues. Or they punish themselves for having vices, . . . [but] we communicate with others in verbs. . . . Gratitude has not even been born until it has been actually conveyed in word or deed. . . ."

The same could be said for sanity, said this same physician. It "is not structural but functional. It is not something one has or is. It is a measure of what one does." (William B. McGrath, M.D., in *Medicine at Work*, February 1966.) If we do sane things, we are sane. If we don't do sane things, we are not sane.

Actions speak louder than words

Actions do speak louder than words.

As to a young person who was speculating upon whether or not she loved someone, there is the reminder that love is not simply a noun and not simply a sentimental feeling. The proof of love is what one is willing to do for the loved one. The proof of love is how one behaves.

Dr. John A. Widtsoe turned his attention to this subject at times: "The full and essential nature of love we may not understand," he said, "but there are tests by which it may be recognized.

Love and truth

"Love is always founded in truth. . . . Lies and deceit, or any other violation of the moral law, are proofs of love's absence. Love perishes in the midst of untruth. . . . Thus, the lover who falsifies to his loved one, or offers her any act contrary to truth, does not really love her.

Love does not injure

"Further, love does not offend or hurt or injure the loved one. By that test any human venture, past and present, can be measured for its real value. Cruelty is as absent from love . . . as truth is from untruth.

Love is a positive force

" . . . love is a positive active force. It helps the loved one. If there is need, love tries to supply it. If there is weakness, love supplants it with strength. . . . Love that does not help is a faked or transient love.

Love gives

"Good as these tests are, there is a greater one. True love sacrifices for the loved one. . . . That is the final test. Christ gave of Himself, gave His life, for us, and thereby proclaimed the reality of his love for his mortal brethren and sisters. The mother gives of her own flesh and blood, and jeopardizes her very life, for her child. In family relationships there must be mutual sacrifices among husband, wife, and children, else true love is not there." (Dr. John A. Widtsoe, *An Understandable Religion*, Ch. 8.)

Love is honest

Thus, anyone who would induce someone to do that which it is unworthy to do, or to take advantage, or rob someone of virtue, or embarrass, or hurt, really doesn't love the person he professes to love. What he feels under such circumstances is something less than love. The proving is in the doing.

Virtues are positive forces

And so it is with all the virtues. Either we live pure lives or we don't. Either we think pure thoughts or we don't. Purity isn't simply a noun. It is a verb. It is the living of a certain kind of life. It is the thinking of certain kinds of thoughts. Its proof is in keeping the commandments.

Goodness is not theory, it is fact.

We may think of tithing as a principle and discuss it and approve it, but

if we are really convinced and converted, we will pay our tithing.

We may think well of the missionary system, but it works only because some leave home and sacrifice and serve sincerely—not merely because it is a good organization or idea.

We may think and talk of chastity as a virtue, but if we are converted and convinced, we will live chaste lives.

If we love our children we won't neglect them or let them run loose. If we love our children we won't leave them ignorant of the law, or of the commandments, or ignorant of how to behave, or unacquainted with sound habits of work, or ignorant of courtesy and acceptable conduct.

If we love our children we will urge them to prepare as fully as they can for life, persuade them to acquire all the training and education possible. If we love our children we will keep as close to them as possible and do our utmost to keep them free from sin and from anything that would clutter or scar their lives.

As parents there is no greater obligation that is ours—and neglect is not the evidence of love. Part of love is doing our duty in love and loyalty, "by persuasion, by long-suffering, by gentleness and meekness, and by love unfeigned;

"By kindness, and pure knowledge. . . ." (D&C 121:41, 42.)

Jesus said: ". . . lovest thou me? . . . Feed my sheep." (John 21:16.)

Elsewhere it is written: "If ye love me, keep my commandments." (John 14:15.)

Doers of the Word

Abstract qualities of character don't mean much in the abstract. It is how we live, how we serve, how we teach our children, what we do from day to day that both indicate what we are and determine what we are; and all the theory and all the speculation, all the quoting of scripture, all the searching of the mysteries, and all the splitting of hairs, and all the knowledge of the letter of the law don't in the final and saving sense amount to very much unless we live the gospel,

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unless we keep the commandments, unless we prove the principles, unless we live lives of effectiveness, sincerity, and service.

The best evidence

Sometimes we hear someone say, "My life is my own. I am going to do with it as I please." But no one's life is his own. Too much of others has gone into the making of all of us.

We cannot hurt ourselves without hurting others. A sorrow, an illness, a disgrace, an accident, trouble, or difficulty of any kind—any loss to loved ones is a loss to family and friends. We are too much a part of one another for this not to be so.

If we love our parents, wouldn't the evidence of it be to do something about it: to be grateful, to help to care for them in their need, to honor them by being honorable, to take them into our confidence—not to worry them?

The best evidence of love for parents would be active evidence of kindness, consideration, appreciation, respect for their teachings and counsel.

The best evidence of love of country would be not what we say—or say we feel—but serving it, keeping the laws, preserving its principles.

The best evidence of love for our Father in heaven would be living lives of honor and reverence; not taking his name in vain; living useful, righteous lives; and keeping his commandments.

As to those who say they love the Church—the best evidence of that love would be serving, doing, giving of ourselves, living its standards, keeping the commandments.

God help us to be members not of record only, but members who place doing and serving and living the requirements of the gospel above our comfort or convenience.

"Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven." (Matt. 7:21.)

It is important to believe; it is important to be; but it is also important to do.

Conviction expressed by conduct

Even the devil believes. (See Jas. 2:19.) "Conviction is worthless unless it is converted into conduct." (Thomas Carlyle.)

Thank God for the gospel, for the personal and literal reality of him who made us in his own image, for his Son our Savior, and for the blessed plan of everlasting life with our loved ones.

Thank God for his patience, for his understanding, for his comfort, for his commandments; for it would be a disillusioning life to be running loose without knowing what was expected of us—or why. Thank God that he sent his Only Begotten Son to show us the way, to redeem us from death, to lead us to everlasting life.

With you I offer gratitude and a pledge to do my best to demonstrate love for our Lord and Savior and his Father who gave us life by living the kind of lives that they would have us live, and leave my witness with you of the truth of that which gathers us here together, in the name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen.

President N. Eldon Tanner:

Elder Richard L. Evans of the Council of the Twelve has been our concluding speaker.

The Ogden Institute Chorale will now sing, "Eternal Life," conducted by Ladd R. Cropper.

The benediction will be offered by Elder Henry E. Peterson, President of the Bountiful North Stake, after which this Conference will be adjourned until 7 o'clock this evening, when the General Priesthood meeting will be held in the Salt Lake Tabernacle.

Priesthood members only are invited to be present. This Priesthood session will not be broadcast publicly.

In addition to the overflow meeting in the Assembly Hall, the proceedings of this Priesthood meeting will be relayed by closed-circuit broadcast, originating in the Tabernacle, to members of the Aaronic and Melchizedek Priesthood assembled in 425 separate locations in all parts of the United States and Canada.