

Confessions - Book Xiii - Chapter

by St. Augustine

Transcript

46. But for those who see these things through thy Spirit, it is thou who seest them in them. When, therefore, they see that these things are good, it is thou who seest that they are good; and whatsoever things are pleasing because of thee, it is thou who dost give us pleasure in those things. Those things which please us through thy Spirit are pleasing to thee in us. \ "For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of a man which is in him? Even so, no man knows the things of God, but the Spirit of God. Now we have not received the spirit of the world, but the Spirit of God, that we might know the things that are freely given to us from God.\ "[648] And I am admonished to say: \ "Yes, truly. No man knows the things of God, but the Spirit of God: but how, then, do we also know what things are given us by God?\ " The answer is given me: \ "Because we know these things by his Spirit; for no one knows but the Spirit of God.\ " But just as it is truly said to those who were to speak through the Spirit of God, \ "It is not you who speak,\ " so it is also truly said to them who know through the Spirit of God, \ "It is not you yourselves who know,\ " and just as rightly it may be said to those who perceive through the Spirit of God that a thing is good; it is not they who see, but God who seeth that it is good.

It is, therefore, one thing to think like the men who judge something to be bad when it is good, as do those whom we have already mentioned. It is quite another thing that a man should see as good what is good--as is the case with many whom thy creation pleases because it is good, yet what pleases them in it is not thee, and so they would prefer to find their joy in thy creatures rather than to find their joy in thee. It is still another thing that when a man sees a thing to be good, God should see in him that it is good--that truly he may be loved in what he hath made, he who cannot be loved except through the Holy Spirit which he hath given us: \ "Because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who is given to us.\ "[649] It is by him that we see whatever we see to be good in any degree, since it is from him, who doth not exist in any particular degree but who simply is what he is.[650]

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