

GRACE GAZETTE

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Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees; And make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed. *Hebrews 12:12-13*

THE WISDOM OF THIS WORLD

And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat. *Genesis 3:6*

It is part of the natural disposition of men to desire knowledge. This is certainly a blessing from GOD. The quest for knowledge and wisdom is not in itself sinful. Yet as with all other things which the LORD has put at man's disposal, his natural disposition is to use those things in a sinful manner and to suppose himself to possess a certain degree of wisdom which enables him to develop his own philosophy and standards, which he would prefer to those of GOD. *"There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death."* (Prov 14:12)

GOD had plainly said, *"Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die."* (Gen 2:16-17) Clearly the LORD made a prohibition against eating of this one tree. HE also declared what would occur when they ate of it. There were no "ifs" involved; either in the prohibition or the outcome of their disobedience. This was their bent. *"Lo, this only have I found, that God hath made man upright; but they have sought out many inventions."* (Ecc 7:29)

Satan appealed to this natural desire, by introducing a lingering question into Eve's mind, subtly questioning the sovereign right of GOD to do with HIS own as HE wills. *"And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?"* (Gen 3:1) She responded truthfully, saying, *"We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die."* (Gen 3:2-3)

Now while she is pondering this nagging question which he had introduced, (not just simply did GOD say this but did HE have the right to say it) he then goes in for the kill, (see I Pet.5:8) and tells the first and greatest lie ever introduced to men, (see John 8:44), *"And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die."* (Gen 3:4)

Then he begins weaving his web of deceit by accusing GOD of unfairly keeping something from them which they surely deserve and which will enable them to be on an equal footing with GOD. *"For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil."* (Gen 3:5) In essence, saying; what right does HE have to prohibit you from this quest of knowledge? HE owes you a fair chance and a square deal.

Now because of her weakness and his subtlety, she was deceived thereby. *"The woman being deceived was in the transgression."* (1Tim 2:14) (see II Cor.11:3) She then gave the fruit to Adam who ate it, willingly and knowingly; demonstrating his love of the flesh and his desire to "know" what he had no business seeking out. Thus is manifested the carnal pride and presumption of men, that they can, by their own wisdom, search out and find the way of GOD. Little did he know or believe that declaration of Paul, *"O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of*

God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!" (Rom 11:33) He demonstrated Paul's words, "Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools." (Rom 1:21-22)

Adam has passed this condition down to all of his posterity. *"As by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." (Rom 5:12)* Man's desire to design his own religion and develop his own philosophy is rooted in his conceited opinion of his worth and supposed wisdom. At the heart of this desire is the denial of the very principle which Satan cleverly deceived the woman with, *"Ye shall not surely die."*

Practically all of the religions of men, in one fashion or another believe that there is an "innate immortality" which men possess. Men, in general, simply do not believe that they can cease to be, (or if they do, they foolishly suppose that they shall not stand in judgment before a HOLY GOD to give an account, and then be cast into an everlasting destruction.) They feel themselves possessed of far too much worth and wisdom, not to live on somewhere, whether that be "heaven" or some other higher state of consciousness. Those who glibly profess their faith in the finality of the grave expect (according to their own philosophy) no terror beyond it. *"A prudent man foreseeth the evil, and hideth himself: but the simple pass on, and are punished." (Pro 22:3)*

Along with man's natural belief in his own immortality is a deeply rooted notion that he possesses a "free will" which is for all intents and purposes "sovereign", since he believes that even GOD HIMSELF does not possess the "right" or ability to control it. They would even bring a veiled indictment against the LORD by saying that HE cannot "violate" their free will as if GOD could somehow be held to account by them or even accused of a "violation". How presumptuous and proud the potsherds of the earth are. We are continually amazed that HE does not annihilate the whole human race on the basis of its impudence alone.

Man goes about strutting and preening in his "wisdom", natural understanding, and fleshly religion, supposing that he can approach GOD on some terms which he has approved or accepted. The scriptures, however, deny that such is the case, informing us that HE *"Only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom be honour and power everlasting. Amen." (1Tim 6:16)*

Men never grow weary in their determination to worship GOD on their own terms. They glory in their "wisdom", "faith", and "confessions", while making a "name" for themselves. This is sheer folly, yet it completely fulfills the purpose of GOD, even as the LORD JESUS stated, *"I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes." (Mat 11:25) "For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent. Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe." (1Cor 1:19-21)*

The *"foolishness of preaching"* does not refer (specifically) to the activity of proclamation by a man but rather refers to the (totally unacceptable to the natural man) declaration of the finished work of CHRIST in saving HIS elect by obtaining their eternal redemption with the offering up of HIMSELF on Calvary's cross in their behalf. Even as Paul says, *"For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God." (1Cor 1:18)*

Man in his wisdom does not consider that the work of CHRIST alone is sufficient for the salvation of HIS people. The purveyors of "religion" speak of CHRIST as having made salvation possible, but that only man by his "free will" can make it complete. This is not the *"preaching of the cross"* but is a mongrel religion which tries to amalgamate the work of GOD and the work of men. To cling to such delusions is to perish. *"But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth: Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ." (IIThe 2:13-14)*

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