

“GOD & THE FOOL” [Psalm 14:1]

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The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God. [KJ]

Fools say to themselves, There is no God! [GN]

Fools say in their hearts, There is no God. [NRSV]

Mahatma Gandhi was once approached by an atheist with the request to organize and promote an anti-God society. Gandhi replied, *"It amazes me to find an intelligent person who fights against something which he does not believe exists."* A pastor in Germany went into a tavern where a man wishing to embarrass him stood up and called out, *"there is no God!"* The pastor went over to him and calmly said, *"friend, you haven't said anything new. The Bible said that more than 2000 years ago..."*

The man replied that he didn't know that the Bible had made a statement like that! Then the pastor told him about Psalm 14:1, *The fool hath said in his heart, there is no God,* and then went on to say, *"there is one great difference between that fool and you. He was quite modest and said it only in his heart. He didn't go around yelling it out loud in public places."*

I often thought that in David's time it was the fool who said there was no God. In our time it is the theologians, the school teacher, the professors, the philosophers, leaders of nations etc. They proclaim it in all their contemporary avenues of teaching then invite all to bask in the so-called light of science which has made the last great and high discovery. The fools are telling us that humanity is no more accountable for its fate than they are for the color of their skin or the shape of their body. Let people do the best they can; let them live up to the light of nature and let them never fear any here-after.

Observe the character in this text. The statement made is: *"There is no God."* The short, terse, response with no argument is, *"the fool has said in his/her heart."* The person who says there is no God is labeled a fool. There is no use engaging in a dialogue or an argument for it is difficult, usually impossible, to get anywhere with such a person. In the eyes of God a fool is a vicious person - or as Scripture says elsewhere - *"a wicked man"* - a wicked person. The Bible reveals such a person as an individual made a wrong choice. When two objects are placed before this person, one a lesser good and one a greater good, they choose the lesser in preference to the greater. Preferring the Christian life and the glories of heaven to a sinful life and the fires of hell is wisdom. The fool is one who has made the opposite choice and their heart is miserable. The world cannot make this person happy. Their soul is immortal. Nothing short of immortality can satisfy such a person. The soul is sinful and is as nothing, but a Savior can give it peace. Right down in the heart the fool knows all this yet will not come to God so as to have peace. So they continue to say in their heart - *"o that there were no God to judge me. I therefore declare that there is no God."*

The word *fool* comes from the word which means, *to wither*. The person who says there is no God then has a withered heart, their affections are blighted, their moral instincts perverted, their natural and noblest aspirations have become utterly extinct. It has been suggested that the present day *"God is dead theory,"* is a confusion of the corpses. The Bible declares it is not God but humanity, the sinner who is dead in trespasses and sin and in need of a supernatural rescue. An article in Christianity Today, said this: *"these professional pallbearers, hired by the devil, who advocate God's death, ostensibly to make Christianity relevant to the modern man, are motivated by concerns quite apart from the weak power of*

supernatural realities over modern life. They actually insist on God's necessary irrelevance and unreality. They attack the existence of a transcendent spiritual realm, repudiate supernatural revealed truths and precepts and administer last rites to the God of the Bible."

In the second place, note the consequences in the mind, heart, and life of this individual. Certain practical consequences are inevitable. In the same verse: *"they are corrupt, they have done abominable works, there is none that doeth good."* The person who declares that there is no God has to go further and declare that they do not have a soul and that there is no life hereafter and that there is no heaven and likewise there is no hell. Such denial involves great consequences. There are physical mysteries which must be accounted for, intellectual phenomena to be explained. Humankind possesses moral intuitions; they have a natural outreaching of a soul; they possess spiritual instincts and aspirations which must be satisfactorily interpreted. We human beings must come to grips with all of these when one says, *"There is no God."* Even the little that we know about this great universe gives evidence of intelligent design. It reveals omnipotent power infinite skill, beauty and glory, all of which is adequate and intelligent cause. No one but a fool would say that it is not the result of a self-existent, independent and infinitely wise God. Look at created man and woman and their existence. Surely the heart must know that such marvelous things could not have been raised out of nothingness by the revolving wheel of time. We note here the phrase, *"in his/the/their heart."* The prophet Jeremiah said, *"The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked - who can know it?"* [Jer. 17:9]. Humanity's great defect is a corrupt heart. It is the fruitful source of all evil, the center of impiety and the seat of foolishness and infidelity. Atheism today and throughout all time has been and is the sad effect of heart degradation, derangement and disorder. Humanity has many times blamed the intellect when it should have been the heart. Let a person have a changed, transformed and regenerated heart and the philosophy of fools will vanish as into thin air.

Note verse 2: *"The Lord looked down from heaven upon the children ... to see if there were any that did understand and seek after God."* And then the answer: *They are all gone aside, NRSV: they have all gone astray, KJ: They are all together become filthy. There is not one that doeth good, not one. Or the NRSV, They are all alike, perverse; There is no one who does good, no, not one.*) We notice that God is not looking upon certain nations or upon particular districts or certain levels of the human family. It is a look upon the entire human race, note He says here - *"the children of humankind."* Observe His look was not only universal, but it was also religious. God does not only see all people everywhere throughout the world but sees their disregard and unbelief. It was not a matter as to whether they were learned, rich, influential, or prosperous, His observations were to see if there were any that did understand and seek God. There is a very real sense in which we could say this is one thing God is really concerned about. We place people in certain properly labeled categories, but He has placed everyone in the same basket of judgment. Isaiah 53:6, *all we like sheep have gone astray. We have turned everyone to his own way.* Romans 3:22,23, *there is no difference, for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.* Here He is searching to see if there is anyone who is seeking after Him. The relationship with God is personal. I cannot declare who is or is not a pallbearer declaring the death of God. You must examine yourself as to how YOU stand in the presence of God. Is He right now your living, loving and personal Savior? Do you know Him, or do you just attend church occasionally in order to have a respectable life? What are your spiritual priorities? Are you seeking first the kingdom of God, or something else? How do you participate in the ministry of Christ's Church? How do you respond to family, friends, neighbors and co-workers etc? Are you

happy to know that Christ made a commitment with His life for you?

As we read further in the Psalm, God provides us certain conclusions. The person who declares, *there is no God*, goes astray in heart and mind. Nothing is easier than for them to sink into the ever deepening abysses of iniquity. There is no place for them to stop. This has happened again and again throughout the history of humanity. In spite of civilization and nations that have come and gone as a result of pushing God out of their hearts and minds, we find this insidious thing assailing us today as never before. It is the old story of saying the other fellow didn't get by with it but I have learned certain lessons and the judgments of God will not catch up with me. I won't get caught like that fool. In the very depth of our being our reason protests against sin, yet we sin against experience. Sin is not a mistake or a misfortune, but is the result of pushing God out of the way, to the back of the bus, outside the room and eventually outside the mind. If we push long enough and hard enough then it will only naturally follow that there is not only no God present, but that there is no God anywhere.

When people with deliberation and finality turn away from God there is no answer, only judgment, *Oh that the salvation of Israel were come out of Zion. When the Lord bringeth back the captivity of his people, Jacob shall rejoice and Israel shall be glad* (v. 7 KJ). When the Lord restores the fortunes of his people, Jacob will rejoice; Israel will be glad. Remember, the fool of the first verse will never bring in the gladness of the last. It is never within the power of the fool to turn the captivity of the world or to enlarge its freedom. Jesus Christ came into the world so that the world through Him might know God and be saved. Turn from the fool and turn to Jesus Christ, for He is the way, the light and the truth. Amen.