

Imagination Is Idolatry

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Imagination is not a gift of God. It is the perversion of God's gift. It is the result of refusing to let God Himself direct the faculties, which He has given us, and trying to direct them ourselves. One has no right to imagine anything. Imagination is but an ignis fatuus** that leads men into a fog. The first chapter of Romans tells what it does for men. They had the knowledge of God, —that is, of the truth, for God had showed it unto them. But they did not like to retain God in their knowledge; they did not like to admit that they were not wise in themselves. So they proceeded to find out the truth by their own "reason." But God is the only source of reason, and "reasoning" without Him is only vain imagination. They saw wisdom and power displayed in the things that are made, and which are growing. But they would not acknowledge that it was God's power and wisdom that were manifested there, for in that case they would have been obliged to acknowledge that it was only by His power and wisdom that they themselves lived and acted and thought. This they would not do, for they professed themselves to be wise; they put themselves in the place of God. Then there was nothing left for them but to say that the things that were made were God, thus changing the truth of God into a lie. Instead of seeing God in everything, they imagined that everything was God, because they rejected the truth to begin with. The truth is that God's power and divinity are to be seen working in everything that is made; the lie is to say that the power and wisdom originate in the things that are made whether it be men or the grass of the field. When men substituted their own imaginations for pure reason, it naturally followed that they gave those imaginations visible form, and so image worship was the result. Imagination is simply the forming of an image in one's own mind. The image that is formed is only the imagination of the heart made visible. To make images is idolatry, whether they be formed by the hands, or only retained in the heart.

The work of the Gospel is to cast down imaginations. "Every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God," must be overthrown, and every thought must be brought into captivity to the obedience of Christ. Imagination has no place in God's work. He deals in facts, not in fancies. The gospel is a fact. There is no speculation about it. We have only to believe what is real, that which has been done and finished.

Think what heights of knowledge we all might have attained to even in our short lives, and with our meager advantages, if we had never learned anything but the truth. We might not have been able to make much of a display, but we would have had something of solid value. One bag full of wheat is worth more than a thousand bags full of air. That which made Jesus of Nazareth superior to all the men of His day was the fact that He held Himself rigidly to the truth. Thank God that even though we have turned every one to his own way, and have filled ourselves with winds of teaching, it is

never too late to learn the truth. If we come to Jesus in humility, He will transform us by the renewing of our minds, even giving us His own perfect mind.

Jesus Christ is the wisdom of God, and he is of God made unto us wisdom as well as righteousness. God's Word is the only source of wisdom; "for the Lord giveth wisdom; out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding." Now since imagination is the deadly foe of the truth and of wisdom, it is evident that in dealing with the Scriptures, above all things, every trace of imagination should be rigidly excluded. Nothing of self must be allowed any place. We must hold ourselves as nothing, not bringing to the study of the Word any preconceived ideas, or rather, what men are pleased to call ideas. We must be silent before the Lord, believing that every word of God is absolute truth, and allowing Him to fill us. Then there will be no mistakes. Then there will be no danger that we shall fall into error. All who do this will see the truth, and will be "perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment." Only in this course is there safety. In thus humbly submitting to be taught of God, not presuming to originate a single thought for ourselves, there are possibilities of almost infinite wisdom for the poorest and humblest souls. They who acknowledge God as the One who is all in all, have access to "all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge."

"Let no man deceive himself. If any man among you seems to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise." 1 Corinthians 4:18

** ignis fatuus: Something that misleads or deludes; an illusion. A phosphorescent light that hovers over swampy ground caused by spontaneous combustion of the gasses emitted from the rotting organic matter. Also called "jack-o'-lantern".