

REVERENTIAL AFFECTION FOR GOD

One of the things that is said of the wicked is that there is no fear of God before their eyes (Psalm 36:1 & Rom. 3:18). By "the fear of God" is meant "a reverential affection for, and awe of, God." Just as Satan and all the other evil spirits despise God and godliness, so too do evil men despise Him and all who follow Him. "The carnal mind is enmity against God" (Rom. 8:7). That is, the unrenewed heart and mind has an innate hostility, dislike and ill will toward God. Not only is there no reverence for God in an unregenerate man's heart, but just the opposite is true. He has an antipathy for, and animosity toward, anything holy and pure. The things of the Spirit of God are foolishness to him. He cannot receive them, nor know them, because the only way such things can be discerned or understood is by *spiritual* perception, which he does not possess and cannot possess until or unless the Lord quickens him into divine life (See I Cor. 2:10-14). This fact is the reason why Arminianism is an unworkable theology. It requires evil men to reverence God in order to have divine life. This they not only *cannot* do, but they have no *desire* to do, because they detest Him. This is the reason that all who are born of the Spirit are thus born *while dead in trespasses and sins* (Eph. 2:1-5). God performs this work at His own appointed time, and He performs it upon those that He chose in Christ "before the foundation of the world" (Eph. 1:4). Then, as a result of the new birth, they become new creatures in Christ (II Cor. 5:17) and reverence for God begins to manifest itself in their lives. They are then described as "God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that (they) should walk in them" (Eph. 2:10). Thus a warfare is set up between their old nature and their new nature, so that their behavior is not always what it should be or what they would have it be (See Rom. 7:14-25 & Gal. 5:16-17). When they perform good works they enjoy the smiling approval of God and He is honored by their conduct, but when they walk according to the flesh they dishonor Him and their consciences are condemned. Hence, much watchfulness and prayerfulness on their part is needed. May those of us who reverence God be helped of Him to fulfill these duties.

—Elder Ralph Harris