

Fools because of their transgression, and because of their iniquities, are afflicted. (Psalm 107:17)

Two popular misconceptions in respect to sin and its sorrows are almost universally believed. The first is that men do wrong because they do not know any better. Their problem is ignorance, lack of information. They do foolish things, behave as fools, for the lack of education. Education, therefore, proper instruction and enlightenment, will cure man's moral behavior, and make him happy and fulfilled. Our text flies in the face of this lie. Men do not transgress because they are fools, but become fools *because* of their transgressions and iniquities.

Is this not what we are told in Romans 1:21-22?

- 21 *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.*
22 *Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, (Romans 1)*

God has graciously given every person (not physically impaired in the brain) reasonable intelligence and responsible moral light. He has revealed in creation more than sufficient evidence of Himself so that reason, properly and fairly employed, would lead man to obedience, increased wisdom, and life. It is not lack of intelligence and understanding that provokes sin, iniquities, transgressions, wrong-doing: it is rebellion, self-will and hatred of God that is behind our sins. The sins, then, in turn, render us the fools which we become. One only needs to continue to read the first chapter of Romans to see how one sin is followed by a worse one, and then that by one yet worse. Sins not possible at the beginning, because the sinner is yet too sane, are increasingly and madly plunged into, because the more one sins, the bigger fool he becomes.

The second misconception is that we sin, enjoy the pleasure and fun of the sin, and then have to suffer punishment for it. It is true that God will bring every evil deed to punishment; that the wages of sin is death. But the idea that sin offers a sort of life and enjoyment, a fun and fulfillment that almost makes the punishment worth while is a devilish lie. The truth of the matter is that sin is, to a remarkable measure, its own retribution and penalty. There is **no** blessing in sin, only cursings. What horrors of darkness await the person who suppresses the knowledge of God and worships and serves the creature! What delusions, bondages, perversions, foolishness, ravages, shame, disgrace, ruin, joylessness, fear guilt, condemnation and damnation!

Their soul abhorreth all manner of meat; and they draw near unto the gates of death. (Psalm 107:18)

Much sooner than later, the sinner has run the course of sin, and found it all a vanity and vexation of the spirit. He has exhausted the devil's barrel and found naught but bitter dregs. He has turned his back on Truth, Reality and Life, when he denied the Creator. Now he has nowhere to turn. He may take his own life, or wait in bitterness for death and hell. Except sovereign mercy find him, there he will be. His darkened soul has no light. Sin has robbed him of sanity. His bitter soul hates and blames God for his miseries. Repentance and faith are impossible.

But electing love awakens this fool. *"He sent his word, and healed them, and delivered them from their destructions. (vs. 20).* What else could provoke such a dead dog to *"cry unto the Lord in [his] trouble?"* As the prodigal, he comes to himself, and though he has denied God and taken his leave of his Father's care, he remembers a God Whose mercies endure forever, and may yet possibly be entreated. All it takes is one desperate trusting cry from dying souls, and the Lord *"saveth them out of all their distresses."*

Oh that men would praise the LORD for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men! (vs. 21).

-C.M.