

"Dixit Insipiens in Corde Suo."

"The fool hath said in his heart: 'There is no God.'" - Psalm 13, Vs. 1. Holy Scripture has a great deal to say about fools, but when it speaks about a fool it does not mean the half-wit as we understand and use the term, but the half-wit in the eyes of God - the sinner.

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"Fool" is a good name for a sinner. Folly is the opposite of wisdom, and wisdom consists in the choice of the best means to attain a certain end. The end of man, the only end that counts, is God. The wise man chooses the best means of reaching God, the means pointed out by God Himself; the fool, for any one of a thousand reasons, chooses the worst means for reaching God.

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To get at the world's idea of folly, you must take away God as man's last end, and substitute worldly pleasure, whether it comes by power, sensual gratification or what-not. From the viewpoint of the world, the greatest fool who ever lived was Christ, and in the present-day hierarchy of fools who follow Christ, the greatest are those who vow themselves to voluntary poverty, perpetual chastity, and entire obedience to a spiritual superior.

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How can these two be reconciled? How can we learn to ride both horses at the same time? There must be a middle course. God gave us two natures, an animal nature and a rational nature; St. Paul recognizes that "the flesh lusteth against the spirit." We have to live in the world and make what we call a "living"; Nature demands that our bodily wants be satisfied.

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It was Christ who said there can be no middle course. "No man can serve two masters...You cannot serve God and Mammon." God gave us two natures, but He gave us an animal nature that must be at all times subject to our spiritual nature. St. Paul recognized the warfare of the flesh against the spirit, but only to warn us to chastise our bodies and bring them into subjection.

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Is it legitimate to conclude that only a fool can refuse to be a daily communicant? Here are the premises: I believe in God as my last end; I realize that wisdom demands I choose the best means for reaching my last end, and that folly is a departure from wisdom. God tells me that without grace I cannot reach my last end. He offers me many means of grace, but the chief means He offers me is Himself, the Author of grace. He offers to come to me every day if I agree to have my soul in such state as I would have it when I am called to judgment.

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I refuse. Why? Because I am too lazy to go to the chapel; because I hope to get drunk at Homecoming; because I find dancing an occasion of sin and I won't give it up; because I gamble; because I prefer evil companions, girls and boys, to God; because I hate my enemy; because I have no time for God. Am I a Fool?

John F. O'Hara, C.S.C.,
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