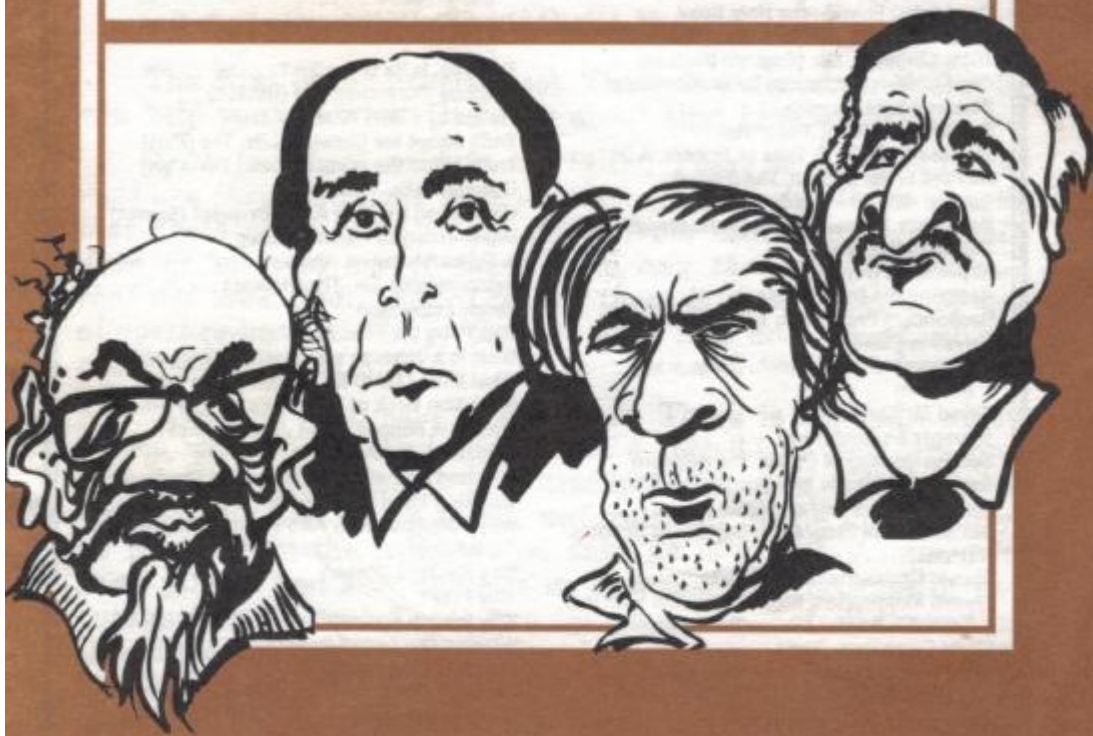


The Four Biggest Fools in Town



Dr. John R. Rice

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Tonight I speak on "The Four Biggest Fools in Dubuque." I use that term as God did, and when the Bible speaks of a person as a fool, I feel perfectly free so to speak. I will use Bible language, and I have a right to. "I am afraid you will hurt somebody's feelings," somebody says. I am afraid I won't. Sometimes you are so anxious not to hurt anybody's feelings that you let the whole town go to Hell. I am going to say some very plain things from the Word of God. The Bible talks about fools, and I am going to talk about four of them tonight.

1. The Atheist Fool

The first is the atheist fool. These few verses in Psalm 53 will help you see what God says about that kind of fool.

"The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God. Corrupt are they, and have done abominable iniquity: there is none that doeth good. God looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, that did seek God. Every one of them is gone back: they are altogether become filthy; there is none that doeth good, no not one." —Psa. 53:1-3.

"The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God." Now a man who says there is no God is a fool. I do not care how wise he thinks he is, he is a crackpot; there is nobody home upstairs; he has rooms to let, unfurnished, in the upper story; he has bats in the belfry—God says he is a fool. A man who is an atheist and says there is no God is a fool, because of two outstanding things. These two things are true of all those that the Bible calls fools. First, he doesn't face the facts. He is not willing to take the evidence. And second, he has an animosity in his heart against the truth. His heart is set against the truth because he does not want to believe. He does not want to look at the evidence, and he will not investigate the

facts. It is evident that any man with half sense knows there is a God, and only a fool would say that there is no God. For instance, you may look at me—I am not much to look at, but I prove there is a God. The fact that I am here proves there is a God. David said, "I am fearfully and wonderfully made."

A few years ago a man got real bright and made a camera. He thought he was sure smart. But God made a camera in every human eye. There is the lens, back of that the dark box, then the super-sensitive film or plate. But God's camera is automatic, self-developing, instantaneous, self-repairing, all-color film, and is infinitely beyond any camera built by science. Yet fools think nobody made man!

A few years ago man got smart and made the telegraph system. But before any man made a telegraph system, God had a whole telegraph system of little nerves in the body, properly insulated, that carry messages to the spinal cord and to the brain. There is a marvel of scientific accuracy in this body of mine. For instance, I touch something hot, and the nerve in the end of my finger says:

"Hey, up there. This is hot down here!"

And the brain says, "You nut, get away then."

Some of you say, "I am perfectly accidental. No God planned me." You do not have any sense, that is all. You are a fool. God says you are a fool, and I say, "Amen" to it. A man is a fool who says there is not any God. Look at any human being and you will know there is bound to be a God to make a man.

There was a time when man made the radio. One of the most wonderful things about the radio is the microphone. When man got smart enough to make the microphone, he was sure smart. The germ of it is in the phonograph. We think that proves Edison was smart because he invented it. But long before any man made it, God made it in the human ear. But some fools say there isn't any God.

Can you make an automobile so it will always repair itself? That is what the body does. I cut my right wrist to the bone with an ax when I was five years old, and it grew back together, and the doctor never saw it until it was well. When I cut that, my uncle grabbed me up and took me to the house. My aunt put some home-made salve on it and wrapped it up. Is there

any kind of an automobile that will grow new rings when the old ones wear out, or grow a fender back together when it breaks? Look at me. Somebody made me. Somebody planned me. Somebody is wiser, stronger than any man. If you say there is no God, you haven't got any sense.

Suppose I see a Ford car and say, "I don't believe there is any such thing as a Ford factory." You ask, "Where did this car come from then?" "Oh, there was some scrap iron jumbled up here, and there was an explosion, and it just happened like this." Isn't that queer? Isn't it strange that the steering wheel was on top? Isn't it strange that it was at the front seat instead of the back seat? Isn't it strange that the seats are facing the same way? Isn't it strange that it has four wheels, two of them to steer and the others fastened to run in the same plane? That is because somebody planned it. Isn't it strange that certain parts are made out of rubber, some parts steel, and then there is a certain kind of paint? Isn't it strange that the shiny paint was put on the outside and the upholstery is on the inside instead of the outside? That is not strange. Why? Because somebody planned it. Yet you look at a man and say there is not any God. You are a fool. You couldn't put two and two together and make it come out four. A man is a fool who says there isn't any God.

A Watch Proves There Is a Watchmaker

Look at this watch. Suppose you ask me, "Where did you get it?" And suppose I answer, as the atheist does, "Oh, it just happened. I don't believe in watchmakers. I never saw a watch factory, so I don't believe there is any such thing as a watch factory. It just happened. Nobody planned it. Nobody made it!"

It is a strange accident that on the face here is "1" and then there is "2." Isn't it strange the "9" didn't come here instead of the "2"? And then there is "3." Isn't it strange it doesn't have a "7" next instead of "4"? And the next is "5." Isn't it a queer accident that it so happened that here are 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12? It is a strange thing that it would have to be twelve and that it would run just once around for the twelve hours a day and once for the twelve hours at night. It is a strange accident that it just happened to have

the "12" following the "11" and the "1" following the "12" and the "2" following the "1" and the "3" following the "2." Isn't that a queer accident? But not nearly so queer as if there were a world and no God to make it; a man, and no Creator.

And here between the "12" and the "1" are five points. And it is that way all the way around so that there are just sixty of those points and this hand goes around those sixty points in just sixty minutes, and comes out exactly on the hour. And then this little hand — this hand goes around sixty seconds in exactly sixty seconds. Suppose I say again, "Nobody planned it. It just happened!"

Is yours that way, too? Isn't that a queer accident that yours and mine are both that way? And is yours that way all the way around? Isn't that a strange thing? It just happened so, nobody planned it. Isn't that a strange accident?

But suppose I say, "I don't believe in watchmakers. This just happened by evolution. It probably got started from a button or a checker. (That is the argument from likeness.) The evolutionist may spread some bones out, and then say, "See, a dog and a man and an elephant and a bird and a lizard are all very much alike, so they just come from each other without any God."

Suppose I say, "All right, this watch probably evolved from a button or a checker into a compass, then a steam gauge, a speedometer and a gas meter till it got to be a watch, with nobody to plan it! It just happened!"

You would say, "You are the greatest nut I ever saw." And if a man says there is no God, he is an outright fool; he hasn't got any sense; there is nobody home upstairs; he has bats in the belfry. God says he is a fool and I say, "Amen."

Here is a world, this planet, and there is the sun. And this planet goes around the sun every year and comes back exactly on the dot again next year, and it doesn't get out of line. The earth turns around and around while it is going around the sun; it revolves on its axis so that there is day and night, day and night, day and night. Then it varies from the plane of rotation around the sun so that we have winter, spring, summer and fall; winter, spring, summer, and fall; winter, spring, summer, and fall. It goes right along, so we have seed time and harvest. Isn't that a queer accident? No, you haven't got any sense if

you say it is an accident. The man who says there is no God, that man is a fool.

The Bible says so truly that "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge. There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard" (Ps. . 19:1-3).

The man who says there is not any God is a man who will not look the facts in the face. He doesn't have any sense. He is perverted in his mind and character, and his poor, wicked heart is set against the truth and he will not investigate the facts. Anybody who says there is not any God has gone away from God. Then he gets to where he does not *want* any God and denies there is a God.

But the verse says, "The fool hath said *in his heart*, There is no God." What is wrong is not with his brain. It may be perverted, but the trouble is with the diseased and decaying heart which is full of wickedness. All fools in the Bible are fools *in the heart*.

The man who is an atheist fool was not born that way, nor did scientific evidence convince him there was no God. When he was a little bit of a child he believed in God. You know, little children do believe in God. Here is a watch; somebody made it. Here is an automobile; somebody made it. Here am I; who made me? All the heathen races in the world know there is a God. The only man who does not believe is the man who has a proud and haughty heart and does not want God. His heart says, "No God." When his heart rebels and he goes on in sin, then he gets so he says, "I don't want any God." What is wrong with the infidel is that his poor, rotten, rebellious heart does not want God because of his sin. He goes on in crime, lewdness, whoremongering, drinking, pride, and then he doesn't want any God; so he says, "No God for me." The wish is father to the thought. The fool said it *in his heart*. If you get a fool's heart fixed right, he will not be an atheist any more. It is not his head, it is his heart.

There were two lawyers. One was a Christian and the other an infidel. The Christian lawyer said to his friend, "If I made up a brief just as I would present it to the Supreme Court of the United States I can show you there is a God and Christ is the

Son of God, and I can show you that the Bible is the Word of God. I have the evidence and any court would accept it. Will you read it if I will prove it to you? I will put in legal form such evidence as would be accepted in any court in the world. Will you read it?"

He agreed to read it. The Christian lawyer got the evidence ready, and the infidel lawyer read it. He came back later and said, "You have convinced me. There is a God and Christ is His Son, and the Bible is God's Word. I believe it!"

The other man said, "Praise the Lord!"

"Wait a minute," the infidel said. "You misunderstood me. I didn't say I love Him. I am not saved. My mind is convinced, but I still don't want Him, and I will not have Him."

The trouble with the infidel was his heart and not his head. There was a time that I thought when an infidel said, "I want to ask you some questions about the Bible," that the real trouble was with his head. But I have found that it was his dirty, rotten heart, and I have the medicine for his heart. Point me out the man who does not believe in God, and if this medicine does not fix his heart, I will guarantee it to shut his trap.

If you spell infidel right you will know what is wrong with him. I-N F-O-R H-E-L-L — infidel. That is the only thing that is wrong with every atheist in the world. The only people who are atheists are those who have hearts that do not want God and they are trying to get some alibi for their sin.

"The fool hath said in his heart, *There is no God.*" And if you will read that again, you will see there are two words in Psalm 53:1 that are not in the original Hebrew at all. You will see them in your Bible because they are put in italics. What are the two words? "There is." "The fool hath said in his heart, *No God.*" It does not mean so much there is no God, but, "I don't want any God. I won't have any God. *No God for me,*" says the fool. There is plenty of evidence that there is a God, but the fool wants nothing to do with Him. The point is, he says, "I don't want any God." "No God for me," says the fool.

If there is anybody here and you are not a Christian and you say you do not believe there is any God at all; no, no, brother; what is wrong with you is that you have some dirty, low-down sin in your heart and if you would confess and forsake that sin God would fix your poor wicked heart mighty quick.

I have found the remedy for the atheist.

I remember at Decatur, Texas, in 1980 a young man said, "I can't believe that stuff."

"Would you like to know?" I asked.

"I don't think I can know," he said.

"I know you can."

He had been reading some of those five cent books on infidelity and some of that *Age of Reason* by Paine.

"Well, I know what to do. Would you like to know?" I said.

"I don't think I can," he said.

"I know you can. I know, but you are guessing. *I know!* I know how you can find out," I said.

"How?"

"Get down on your knees. I could take the Bible if I wanted to and show you plenty of reason the Bible is true and Christ is His Son and our Saviour. But what is wrong with you is your heart. Ask God to open your heart."

"But I don't know there is any God."

"You don't know, but I know there is, and your mother knows and millions of others know there is. Get down on your knees and say, 'All right, Lord, if there is a God and You are the God that made me, then I ought to love You. If You will show me Yourself, I will. And if You will show me the Bible is Your Word, I will follow it. If You will show me in my heart that Christ is the Son of God, I will trust Him.' Come on; get on your knees and find out."

"But I don't believe you can."

"I don't care whether you believe you can or not. I tell you, you can find out. And you will either get down on your knees and confess to God, 'Lord, if You are God and I am a sinner and I need forgiveness, and if You will show me Yourself so I can know that You are the God that made me and know the Bible is true and know that Christ is the Son of God, then I will love You and trust You and give You my heart tonight' — you will either do that or I will brand you for the dirty hypocrite you are and shut your trap."

He said to his brother who was standing there, "That looks like it is fair to me. If a man wants to know he had better find out." His brother did not want to get on his knees, but this fellow said, "Yes, you will, too, or you will have to shut your

mouth! We will have to put it to a test or say we wouldn't take a fair chance to find out."

We got down on our knees, and this young man began to pray, "O God, if there be a God, show Yourself to me," and it wasn't long until he was weeping. Soon he said, "I know there is a God! He has spoken to my heart. I just got in sin and was led away into this wickedness. I know He is the Saviour and I will give Him my heart and serve Him!"

What is wrong is in the heart of any wicked man who says there is no God. "The fool hath said in his heart, No God."

II. The Modernist Fool

There is another kind of a fool. I turn to Luke, chapter 24. After His resurrection, Jesus said to two doubters:

"O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory? And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself." —Luke 24:25-27.

Now Jesus said to these who did not believe in the resurrection, "O fools and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken." Is there anybody here tonight who is a modernist? A modernist is one who says, "I believe there is a God, but I cannot believe the Bible. He is one who says, "I can't believe the story of the Genesis account of creation. I believe in evolution instead of direct creation," or he says, for instance, "I can't believe the story of Jonah and the whale," or "I can't believe in the bodily resurrection of Christ and the virgin birth and the verbal inspiration of the Bible." Such a man is what we call a modernist. He does not believe the Bible. Jesus said, 'O fools and slow of heart to believe the Bible.' God says what is wrong with that man is that he is a fool.

First, let me tell you what kind of a fool he is. He is a low-down, dirty, insincere hypocrite. Any man who stands behind a pulpit in a church built by money of people who believe the Bible, and receives a salary from people who believe that Christ is the Son of God and that He died for sinners, who believe in the blood atonement; any man who takes a salary from that kind of people and takes his training from a school supported by that kind of people, and then stands in his pulpit and calls

himself a Christian, and calls himself a preacher of the gospel but denies the Bible; he is a conscienceless, covetous hypocrite, and he is going to the bottomless pit of Hell, and he ought to, and you ought never to give a dime to that kind of a hypocrite. He ought to be dragged from the pulpit. He can't be respected, and he is not honest. He is crooked, as crooked as any man behind the bars. He is a deceiver and a liar and takes his money under false pretenses. He says, "I am a Christian, but I don't believe in Christ. I preach the Bible but think it is a pack of lies." He is a deceiver, I say, and is after the money and is not worthy of the respect of decent people. I say in plain words, I have no respect in the world for a man who will take money of innocent people who believe the Bible and then little by little tear down their faith in the Bible.

If a modernist preacher were honest he would simply say, "I am not a Christian. I do not believe the Bible. I do not trust Christ as my Saviour, so I cannot take money as a preacher. I am with Paine, Ingersoll, Voltaire and all enemies of the Bible."

A modernist in the church is not worthy of the respect of anybody here. If you attend a church and your preacher does not believe all the Bible, you have blood on your hands, and you are a partaker of his evil deeds if you give him a dime (II John 10,11). You are not even to have such a man in your house. You are not even to say, "God speed you." Don't give a penny to that kind of a preacher! It is a sin against God if you do.

There is only one place for honest modernists and that is outside the church, not in it. Every modernist claiming to be a Christian is a lying hypocrite, sailing under false colors.

It is high time more churches turn out unbelievers who are in the pulpit. And every honest, Bible-believing preacher should say so. There are too many sissies in the pulpit. Preachers should have the manhood and character to stand up for Christ and the Bible or get out of the sacred pulpit.

If that hurts anybody's feelings, I am going to preach about it again. I have no respect for any dirty, lying hypocrite who pretends to be a Christian and does not believe the Bible, who pretends to believe in Jesus Christ but snatches the crown of deity off His head, who denies the atoning blood and insults the Holy Spirit. He is not worthy of the respect of any and should not have the support of Christian people.

What is wrong with the modernist is, the Bible says, he is

a fool. Why is he a fool? Because he will not face the facts. Now, my friends, I don't have to apologize when I say that this Bible is the Word of God. There was a time when I did not know. I got my education in a modern university, went to Baptist schools, but some teachers believed in evolution. They said the Bible is fine, but man came by evolution. I had not tried to reconcile the two, so on one side of my head was the theory of evolution, and on the other was my belief in the Bible as the Word of God. But one day the two ideas got together, and what a stir-up there was! They can't both be so. If the Bible is so, evolution can't be so. And if evolution is true, then the Bible can't be true. And I said, "I am going to find out," and I did. And now I know, and I can prove to you that the Bible is the Word of God.

Somebody says, "The Bible is not scientifically accurate." I will meet any university professor, any reputable head of a department of a university, in a public auditorium or on the radio night after night and defend the fact if he will say the Bible is not scientifically accurate. I know it is. I challenge anyone to show in one detail that the Bible in the original manuscript is not infallibly correct, the Word of God. This Bible is the Word of God, and you can find out. The man who says it is not does not know, and he has not investigated, and he has no right to say. The man who knows what the Bible says is bound to bow to it.

I will tell you the best evidence I ever heard for evolution. A man went hunting out in the mountains of New Mexico and he came upon a panther, a mountain lion. This lady was on the warpath and came after him. He took up his gun to shoot, but the gun jammed. So he turned and ran for his life, the mountain lion after him. Down the mountain he went to a deserted vinegar factory in the valley. He anxiously wondered what to do? The mountain lion was right behind him. There was a big hogshead there and he jumped in that and turned it down over him. The mountain lion got on top of it, snarling and clawing. He looked out of the bung hole and saw the lioness swishing her tail back and forth across that hole. He pulled her tail in through the bung hole and tied a knot in it. When he did, she let out a squall and away she went, that big barrel bouncing behind her. (I wasn't there, but this is what I heard. This is the best proof for evolution I ever heard.) The next

year the same man went back hunting again and he saw that same mountain lion, and she still had the hogshead on her tail. By this time she had mountain lion kittens, and each one of them had a little keg on his tail! That is the best evidence I ever heard for evolution! (This is what I heard and you can take it for what it is worth. No evolutionist has any evidence but guesses and hearsay.) People who do not want to believe the Bible can believe that, if they will not listen to something sensible.

Listen to this: "And God made the beast of the earth after his kind, and cattle after their kind, and every thing that creepeth upon the earth after his kind" (Gen. 1:25). "After his kind," "after their kind"; God says that *ten times* in one chapter on creation! What do you think about that? "After his kind." Does that really happen, each one "after his kind"? Not identical but similar. That leaves room for variety. But life never crosses over boundaries from one kind of species to another, never has, and never will. God made them that way. There has never been a single known instance where that law is broken.

You say the Bible is not scientific. Somebody says, the Bible talks about the earth's being flat. Have you heard some half-wit saying that science proved the earth was round but the Bible said it was flat? The truth is that long before science found that the earth was round, the Bible said it. Isaiah 40:22 says, "It is he that sitteth upon the *circle* of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers; that stretcheth out the heavens as a curtain, and spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in."

"He that sitteth upon the circle [or roundness] of the earth." While the ancient scientists thought the earth was a big flat disk on the back of an elephant, the Bible said, "He . . . hangeth the earth upon nothing" (Job 26:7). In Luke the seventeenth chapter, Jesus is talking about His second coming as sudden lightning that flashes out of the east and shines unto the west and said the coming of Christ would be like that. And then He says, "In that night there shall be two men in one bed; the one shall be taken, and the other shall be left." So that proves the coming of Christ will be at night. But He also said, "Two women shall be grinding together" — that is morning. "Two men shall be in the field; the one shall be taken, and

the other left" — and that is midday. What does that mean? The Bible is saying that as a flash of lightning Jesus will come, and on one part of the earth it will be night and on another morning, and at another noon. That is true about a round earth, but that could not be true of any kind but a round earth. The Bible told that when scientists knew nothing about it. Yes, the Bible proves itself as the inspired, miraculous Word of God.

Then in the second chapter of Daniel you get an outline of world history: the kingdoms of Babylon, Media-Persia, Greece, and Rome. In foretelling them, God started with the very first one. All that is written there is coming to pass. That great image had a head of gold, representing Babylon; breast and arms of silver, representing Media-Persia; belly and thighs of brass, representing Greece; and the legs of iron representing Rome, and Rome divided in the eastern and western kingdoms, pictured by the two legs. This was foretold hundreds of years before most of it came to pass. The ten toes of the image represent ten kingdoms from the area of the Roman Empire: Spain, France, Italy, Turkey, Greece, Portugal, Egypt, Palestine, etc. All came to pass.

My! my! Isn't it strange the Bible hit it exactly? It proves man did not write it, but God wrote the Bible. The Bible is the infallible Word of God. It is full of proof that it is God's Word. So any man is a fool who is slow to believe the Bible. Jesus said so.

Anyone who wants to know the truth is bound to admit that the Bible is the infallible, divinely inspired Word of God.

The Bible told that Jesus would be born in Bethlehem (Micah 5:2). It foretold the very year He would come (Dan. 9:25), sixty-nine weeks of years, or 483 years after the decree to rebuild Jerusalem. How did those wise men from the East know the Saviour was to be born? Because they had read in the book of Daniel (written in the East at Babylon) where it was coming to pass, and they counted the years, and there were exactly sixty-nine weeks of years, 483 years, exactly as prophesied, and then He came.

It was foretold when Jesus would die, even to the very day He should die and the time of the day. Do you know that for fifteen hundred years the Jews were killing a passover lamb, a picture of Christ, and showing the day of the year and the hour that Jesus would die? And He died exactly on the dot.

It was foretold what He would say on the cross in the Twenty-second Psalm. The very words those people down in front of the cross said to Him were foretold. And it was foretold that they would pierce His hands and His feet (Zech. 12:10; Zech. 13:6; Ps. 22:16). His riding into Jerusalem on the colt, the foal of an ass, was foretold (Zech. 9:9). Only a fool would say the Bible is not the Word of God. So Jesus said, "O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken."

What is wrong is that a modernist is slow *of heart* to believe. It is not just his head, though that is addled, of course. There are special machines contrived to addle the brains of preachers, sometimes called seminaries, modernistic seminaries. Thank God, some seminaries are sound. The modernist's brain is a little addled, but that is not the trouble. The trouble is with his poor, wicked, rotten heart, his Christ-rejecting, self-loving, sin-embracing heart; and the *heart* is slow to believe the Bible. *It is the heart!* With anybody who does not believe the Bible, the real trouble is in his heart. If you had a good case of faith in Christ in your heart, and a new birth, it would not be any trouble to believe the Bible. That is what all the modernists need. They need to be born again to be kept out of Hell.

Then to be sure you would know what part of the Bible Jesus was talking about, Luke said, "And beginning at Moses [Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy] and all the prophets he expounded unto them *in all the scriptures* the things concerning himself." The Bible is the Word of God, and a man is a fool who denies or questions it; or, putting it in the words that Jesus used, is slow to believe. A man is a fool in his heart who is slow to believe the Word of God.

III. The Sinning Fool

In Proverbs 14:9 is God's Word about the sinning fool.

"Fools make a mock at sin: but among the righteous there is favour."

There is the fool who makes a joke out of sin. He thinks sin is a joke.

You think I preach too plain, perhaps, but God hates sin. It was sin that took Jesus to the cross. It is sin that fills every hospital and every jail and causes every disease and disappointment and all the broken hearts. It is sin that is populating Hell. I have a good reason to hate it, and you ought to hate it. The

Bible says of the man who makes a joke of sin, that man is a fool.

I have heard preachers laugh and tell funny stories about what a man said when he was drunk. It is not funny to God, and anybody who thinks it is a big joke, God says, is a fool.

Some do not like it because I preach on Hell and judgment. They are no joke. And death is no joke. And you may die and meet God unprepared and that is no joke.

You have a little child and you tell him to do something, and he says, "Not do it!" You say, "Isn't that cute?" No, it is not cute. He is starting out to be this kind of fool, and if you laugh at him you are a fool, too. It is only a fool who makes a joke out of sin.

Some say, "Well, young people have to have a good time. They have to sow their wild oats." No, they do not have to sow their wild oats. But there is one thing they do have to do: they have to reap them if they do sow them. That is what you have to do. And the man is a fool who thinks sin is a joke, and you are a fool if you think you can get by with sin and do not want to be warned about sin, do not want to repent of your sin, and you are irritated by my preaching on sin. If you think sin is a light matter, if you think sin is a joke, you are a fool and you do not have any sense. You are going to wake up butting your head against God's wall of judgment one of these days. You will go around a corner and suddenly meet God! One who thinks sin is a joke is a fool, God says.

IV. The Fool Who Neglects Salvation

I turn to another. I suppose there are not very many fools in this audience who say there is no God. I hope not. And there are not many, perhaps, who do not believe the truth of the Bible. If there are some, God says you are a fool. Some of you think sin is a joke, and God says you are a fool. But that is not the worst kind of fool. Here is another, and this is the biggest fool in Dubuque. In Luke, chapter 12, begin with verse 16. I will read to you:

"And he spake a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully: And he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room

where to bestow my fruits? And he said, This will I do; I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods."

See, this man is a smart guy. You know, I admire a man who works. In spite of the New Deal, I still believe a man ought to work for a living. I never did believe a man could drink his way to prosperity or spend his way to prosperity. If you waste your substance in riotous living, you will have a hogpen experience coming, a period of famine and want as the prodigal son had. I do not believe at all in the modern theory, the antithesis and opposite of all Americanism that was taught us, that these days we should throw money to the winds and spend the other fellow's money, seizing it by confiscatory taxes, and then spending borrowed money to be a burden on our grandchildren. I believe that is of the devil and is as sinful as it can be. I believe that anybody who starts out on his way of wasting his substance with wine, women, and song is headed for the hogpen and famine and a time with an awfully broken heart, when he finds himself away from God. You may not like that, but sin works that way just the same with the New Deal and the government as it does with one man. I do not care what kind of fool he is, it will always turn out the same way when a fool wastes his money.

I say, I admire this man for saving his goods. He was an honorable, hard-working man. Look at him. In the first place, he worked. I know a lot of you raise Cain for a thirty-hour week. He didn't. He believed in working for a living, not that the government owed him a living.

I am reminded of that W. P. A. worker who complained because he did not have a shovel.

"That's all right, you don't have to work much," the foreman told him.

"But these other guys have a shovel to lean on, and I haven't!"

I know you feel bad if you have to work more than thirty hours a week. But this man worked and earned his goods, and that is still God's way. "*Six days shalt thou labour.*" This was a pretty bright guy. The government did not pay this man not to farm and to kill off the pork and throw it in the Missouri River while the poor people in the cities go without food, or plow up cotton, and be paid not to farm. You people like for the

government to feed you. Go ahead if you like, but that way of doing it is not the American way. That is not the way that brought prosperity and blessing, and I have no confidence in that way of bringing a blessing.

This man in the Bible put up his surplus in barns and kept it. But listen what happened to him, what the Lord said about him:

"But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided? So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God."

I tell you, my friend, you listen to me, that man was a fool for all he had laid by, for all his money that he made and saved and all that he worked hard for; he was a fool. Though he would have been the chairman of the board at the bank, though you would have wanted him on your board of elders in the church, despite the fact that he made money and saved it, this man was a fool because he neglected his soul. He said to himself; "Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years, take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry." He said, 'You have money laid up for a long time.'

But God said, "Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be which thou hast provided?" "Tonight you will leave them, and you are a fool," God said. God said a man is a fool who is not rich toward God.

You say, "I have a good job, Brother Rice. I am making good. I am not depending on the government; I am depending on God and my honest sweat to make a living, as the Bible said." God bless you, I am glad you do. But I don't care how smart you are, you are a fool if you spend any time making money when you are not saved. Tonight if you go home and lay your head on your pillow and go to sleep before getting right with God, you are a fool.

Tomorrow you will go down to work, it may be, and earn a day's pay and get along fine and bring the money back. If you do that before you get right with God you are a fool! Maybe tomorrow morning you will sit down at the breakfast table and enjoy your bacon and eggs and grapefruit and toast and coffee. If you do that and you have not sought Christ and found peace and forgiveness in your soul, you are a fool!

If there is anybody here tonight unsaved who gets any more rest, eats any more meals, works any more at your job while you may die and go to Hell, you are a fool if you don't settle first things first. The only sensible thing for any of you who are about to go to Hell is, certainly, to be saved while you can.

The rich man said to himself, 'Soul, you have plenty laid by; take thine ease.' And while that man was a fool, so is every one that is not rich toward God. If you have your mind on your business and pleasure and caring for your family and what you eat and where you sleep when you are lost, you are a fool. If you do not have a new heart, if you have not had a transaction with God and by faith have trusted Christ to save you and have given Him your heart and He has forgiven you and made you a new creature in Christ, and tonight your sins are blotted out — if that has not happened to you, you are a fool to do anything else until that is settled.

Hell is not filled with people who say there is no God. By the time they get to the fire they already say, "Yes, there is a God." Oh, yes. But Hell is filled up with the kind who say, "I am going to be saved; I am going to get saved, but not now; I have plenty of time." That is the kind of folly that has filled Hell. The biggest fool is the man who is not rich toward God and yet spends his time with other things instead of getting saved. Are you that kind of fool? I hope you are not. Oh, it would be a horrible thing if on the road home tonight God should say to you, "Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee." Wouldn't that be a horrible thing?

If you are unsaved and you go home that way, you are a fool. You say, "Oh, but I am a church member." Maybe this man was, too, but that is not the point. He was not rich toward God. He had never been born again. Or you say, "I am a member of the Masonic lodge." This man might have been, too. The Bible does not say a word against his moral life. I tell you the truth, if you are not rich toward God and if you do not have peace with God and are not ready to die, if you do not have a new heart, God says you are a fool. You will be called out to meet God branded as a fool. You have got to meet God, and you had better turn and seek God while you can. I hope God will give you grace to see that one who is not rich toward God is guilty of folly, even if he is a church or lodge member. Whatever you are, if you don't know you are saved, you are a fool to

waste your time until you get saved. Do not let it slip. I would not go to my job until I knew my soul was saved. I would settle that one thing tonight. I would make sure my soul is saved.

I was in Oklahoma City in a tent revival campaign when a girl from a fine family came down the aisle. I heard her talking to herself as she sat down and put her face in her hands. She said, "Oh, what will my mother think? What will Mother think? But what does it matter what Mother thinks, just so my soul is saved! Just so I know I am saved, what does it matter what my crowd thinks. Never mind, Lord, just so I know I am saved." And she said, "What will my father think?" And the more she talked to the Lord about it, the louder she talked, and I just quit and let her talk.

"What will my father think? He had big plans for me, but, Lord, never mind what anybody thinks, just so my soul is saved."

I tell you, my friends, you are a fool if you do not get this thing settled before you waste any time.

If I have gotten on your toes, may God give you grace to know that God has gotten on your toes, too, and that you must give account to Almighty God. You go on and make a living and lay up money and build yourself a nice home and fill your belly and clothe your back with the best in this land; nevertheless you know that God one day will point His finger in your face, and the cold, clammy hand of death will close around your throat, and the grim monster will blow his cold breath in your face, and you will find you are going out to meet God, and God will call you a fool, because you wouldn't get ready when you had a chance. "Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided?"

To any dear sinner who reads this sermon: God used this message to win souls. I pray He has convicted you of your sins and led you to see you need a Saviour. If you will trust Christ today with all your heart, copy the decision form below and mail to me, that I may rejoice with you, or write me in your own words.

