

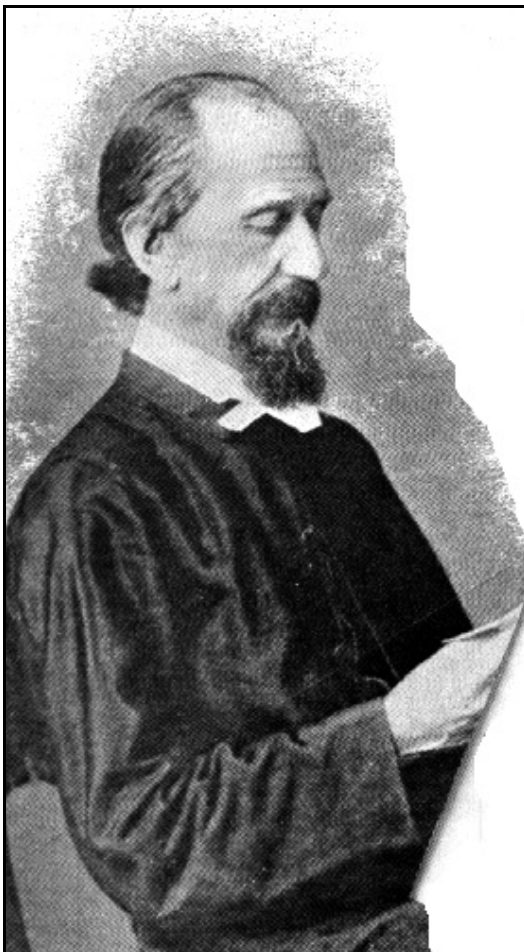


Indictment

SIN -- OUR DEGENERATIVE "I" DISEASE

Study 2a: The DESCENT of MAN (1:18-32)

Do not be deceived. God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap. Gal.6:7



ANDREW MURRAY

In his many books, especially *Humility*, Murray made vivid the need for Christians to be truly humbled before God, in order to enter into the full blessings of our calling. An inadequate view of sin prevents this.

2 REVELATIONS (Gk. *apokalyptetai*)

– the **RIGHTEOUSNESS** (v.17) and **WRATH** of GOD (v.18)

"I" Disease Itemized

SIN SOWED

1. IGNORANCE, IRREVERENCE
(vv.18-20; note1)
2. INGRATITUDE (v.21)
3. IMMORALITY
(v.24; notes 3,4)
4. INIQUITY
(vv.28-31; notes 8, 9)
5. IMPENITENCE (v.32)

WRATH REAPED

1. INSANITY
(vv.21-22, 28)
2. IDOLATRY
(vv.23-25; note 2)
3. INDECENCY, INVERSION
(vv.26, 27; notes 5,6,7)
4. INDULGENCE (v.32)
5. INEXCUSABLE
(v.32; notes 10,11)

1. All heresy has its source in wrong or feeble conceptions of sin ... God punishes sin with sin. This is his "wrath." If men will not honour him, he takes away from them the power of chastity and morality. Indeed, the section teaches that these sins come as a punitive infliction from God. This wrath against the race can never cease while men as a whole refuse to glorify him "as God." The attempt to rid the unbelieving world of the moral ills that afflict it is to attempt to change God's judgment of wrath. The world has deliberately and finally cast God off. It is well-nigh two thousand years since this sad list of sins was set down by the pen of Paul. Let candor say which one of them has ceased to have any existence among men. They came in God's wrath then because men refused the light of nature. The light to-day in Jesus Christ is many times more intense, and men still refuse.

James Stifler, *THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS* (2e. 1897) pp.22,28.

2. The higher the advancement of the nations in refinement and philosophy, the greater, as a general rule, the degradation and folly of their systems of religion.

Charles Hodge, cited in *J. Calvin* (see below, p.74)

3. The individual atheist, or polytheist, may conceivably be a virtuous person, on the human standard; but if he is so it is not because of his creed. Let his creed become a real formative power in human society, and it will lead inevitably to moral disease and death ... [God] has so constituted natural process that wrong gravitates to wretchedness; and He is in that process, and above it, always and for ever. -- **Handley C.G. Moule**, *THE EPISTLE OF ST. PAUL TO THE ROMANS* (*Expositor's Bible*, 4e. 1907) pp.48-49.

4. [the lost] enjoy forever the horrible freedom they have demanded, and are therefore self-enslaved.

C.S. Lewis, *THE PROBLEM OF PAIN* (1940) p.115ff.

5. There is a moral law in life that men are left to the consequences of their own freely chosen course of action, and unless this tendency is reversed by divine grace, their situation will go from bad to worse ... The truth was accessible to them, but they suppressed it unrighteously and embraced "the lie" in preference to it. Therefore "God gave them up" to the consequences of their choice. And precisely here He has manifested His "wrath" -- that principle of retribution which must operate in a moral universe.

F.F. Bruce, *THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE ROMANS* (TNTC) pp.81,83.

6. Yet the vices of the old time are not altogether an antiquarian's wonder. Now as truly as then man is awfully accessible to the worst solicitations the moment he trusts himself away from God. And this needs indeed to be remembered in a stage of thought and of society whose cynicism, and whose materialism, show gloomy signs of likeness to those last days of the old degenerate world in which St. Paul looked round him, and spoke out the things he saw. -- **H.C.G. Moule**, *op.cit.*,pp.51-52.

7. Woman is the purer, the most modest, of the sexes, has propensities less ardent; but even she became worse than beastly and equaled vile man in his depravity. -- **James Stifler**, *op.cit.*,p.26

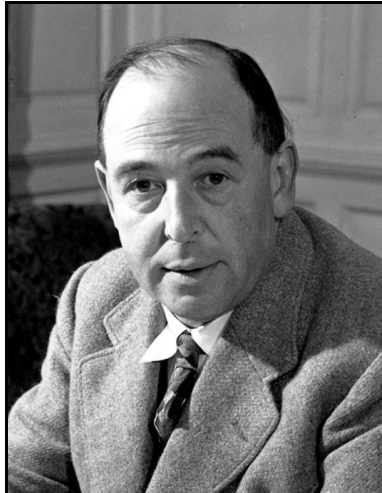
8. Paul here records those abominations which had been common in all ages, and were at that time especially prevalent everywhere; for it is marvellous how common then was that filthiness which even brute beasts abhor ... As they chose not to continue in the knowledge of God, which alone guides our minds to true wisdom, the Lord gave them a perverted mind, which can choose nothing that is right. -- **John Calvin**, *COMMENTARIES ON THE EPISTLE OF PAUL ... ROMANS* (1539; tr. J. Owen) p.79.

9. In the preceding verses the delineation of the retribution meted out to apostasy had been restricted to the sexual vice. The reason is very likely that the apostle regarded the homosexual abominations as the most overt evidences of the degeneracy to which God in his wrath gave over the nations. -- **John Murray**, *THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS* (1959) Vol.1, p.49.

10. However severe has been the apostle's delineation of the depravity of men, he has reserved for the end the characterization which is the most damning of all. It is that of the consensus of men in the pursuit of iniquity. The most damning condition is not the practice of iniquity ... it is that together with the practice there is also the support and encouragement of others in the practice of the same. To put it bluntly, we are not only bent on damning ourselves, but we congratulate others in the doing of those things that we know have their issue in damnation ... Iniquity is most aggravated when it meets with no inhibition from the disapproval of others and

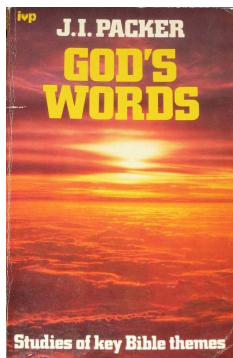
when there is collective, undissenting approbation. -- **John Murray**, *op.cit.*,p.52.

11. For it is the summit of all evils, when the sinner is so void of shame, that he is pleased with his own vices, and will not bear them to be reprov'd, and also cherishes them in others by his consent and approbation ... For he who is ashamed is yet healable; but when such an impudence is contracted through a sinful habit, that vices, and not virtues, please us, and are approved, there is no more any hope of reformation. -- **John Calvin**, *op.cit.*,p.83.



C.S. LEWIS
The "horrible freedom"
of the lost

'Our first need in life is to learn about sin ...'



The subject of sin is vital knowledge. To say that our first need in life is to learn about sin may sound strange, but in the sense intended it is profoundly true. If you have not learned about sin, you cannot understand yourself, or your fellow-men, or the world you live in, or the Christian faith. And you will not be able to make head or tail of the Bible. For the Bible is an exposition of God's answer to the problem of human sin, and unless you have that problem clearly before you, you will keep missing the point of what it says. Apart from the first two chapters of Genesis, which set the stage, the real subject of every chapter of the Bible is what God does about our sins. Lose sight of this theme, and you lose your way in the Bible at once. With that, the love of God, the meaning of salvation, and the message of the gospel, will all become closed books to you; you may still talk of these things, but you will no longer know what you are talking about. It is clear, therefore, that we need to fix in our minds what our ancestors would have called 'clear views of sin'.

J.I. Packer *God's Words* p.71