

Decline and Fall By Stan Cox

Gibbons, in his well respected work entitled, *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, lists seven reasons he contends were the major culprits resulting in the fall of the greatest of the ancient empires.

The seven reasons listed are:

The divorce rate rose.

Taxes got higher

More public money was spent for welfare.

The craving for greater pleasure and leisure increased.

Sports appeared to get more exciting, more brutal.

The building of gigantic armaments continued.

Religion was thought by many to be on the decay.

Now, it doesn't take a genius to see the parallels of the ancient society with our day and time. And this is a pretty strong indicator of the present state of our society as well. If Gibbon's list fails to impress, how about comparing the pagans of Paul's day with our society. Paul said, in describing that society in Romans One:

“And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a debased mind, to do those things which are not fitting; being filled with all unrighteousness, sexual immorality, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, evil-mindedness; they are whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, violent, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, undiscerning, untrustworthy, unloving, unforgiving, unmerciful; who, knowing the righteous judgment of God, that those who practice such things are deserving of death, not only do the same but also approve of those who practice them” (vs. 28-32).

Once again, the parallels are obvious, and show that we live in a society that has forgotten God, and as such is in extreme danger of His judgment. We, of course, do not know the when of judgment, as God works in His way, and His time. However, we do know that He indeed works in the affairs of men, and this nation exists solely at His discretion. Paul stated in Acts 17:26, “And He has made from one blood every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, and has determined their pre-appointed times and the boundaries of their dwellings.”

As a nation, we must repent, and remember God again. To refuse is to doom ourselves to the same end as that suffered by Rome, Babylon, Assyria, and Egypt. As the people of God, we must be about our Father's business. The only cure is the gospel of Christ. The changing power of that glorious word is what transforms man, and brings him to a right standing with his creator. Are you preaching the gospel to a lost and dying society? (Reflections on the Scriptures, 10/15/95)

Gratitude

There are so many little, everyday things to remind us of our blessings; for instance, a good woman said: "They huddled inside the storm door--two children in ragged out-grown coats. 'Any old papers, lady?' I wanted to say no... until I looked down at their feet, little sandals slopped with sleet. 'Come in and I'll make you a cup of

hot cocoa.' Their soggy sandals made marks upon the hearthstone. Cocoa, toast and jam to fortify against the chill outside. The girl held up her cup, looking at it. The boy asked in a flat voice, 'Lady, are you rich?' Am I rich? My, no! The girl put her cup back in the saucer carefully and said, 'Your cups match your saucers.' They then left, holding their papers against the wind. Plain blue pottery cups, but they MATCHED. Potatoes and brown gravy, a roof over our heads, my husband with a good steady job. THESE THINGS MATCHED, TOO. The muddy prints of small sandals were still wet upon my hearth. I let them be. I wanted them there in case I ever forget again how very rich I really am!" May we always count our blessings and be grateful for them. (LeRoy Brownlow via Greatest Questions in the New Testament, pg 94, 1961)

God Give Us Such
By Athol Murray

The world today is looking for men and women
Who are not for sale,
Who can tell the truth and look the world right in the eye,
Who have courage without shouting it,
Who will not lie, shirk or dodge,
Who are not too lazy to work, nor too proud to be poor,
Who are not afraid to say 'No' with emphasis.
God give us such as them.

Sin is not a Disease

It is a large matter and too much to one side of the road to be discussed adequately here; but this is the real objection to that torrent of modern talk about treating crime as disease, about making a prison merely a hygienic environment like a hospital, of healing sin by slow scientific methods. The fallacy of the whole thing is that evil is a matter of active choice whereas disease is not. If you say that you are going to cure a profligate as you cure an asthmatic, my cheap and obvious answer is, 'Produce the people who want to be asthmatics as many people want to be profligates.' A man may lie still and be cured of a malady. But he must not lie still if he wants to be cured of a sin; on the contrary, he must get up and jump about violently. The whole point indeed is perfectly expressed in the very word which we use for a man in hospital; "patient" is in the passive mood; "sinner" is in the active. If a man is to be saved from influenza, he must be a patient. But if he is to be saved from forging, he must be not a patient but an impatient. He must be personally impatient with forgery. All moral reform must start in the active not the passive will. (G. K. Chesterton, 1908)

MORE!

"Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord" (1Cor. 15:58).

Do more than exist - live! Do more than touch - feel! Do more than look - observe! Do more than read - apply! Do more than hear - listen! Do more than think -

ponder! Do more than intend - act! Do more than plan - fulfill! Do more than say - perform! Do more than care - love! Yes, we need to be people who desire to do more, and not be like those who look for ways to do less! (From The Vegas Drive Messenger)

A Moments Wisdom

Law tells me how crooked I am; Grace comes along and straightens me out.
Stewardship is what a man does after he says, I believe.
First, men practice sin, then defend it, then boast of it.
To sin by silence when they should protest makes cowards out of men.
God has not called me to be successful; He has called me to be faithful.
The gem cannot be polished without friction, nor man perfected without trials.
Happiness is a perfume you cannot pour on others without getting a few drops on yourself.
Courage--fear that has said its prayers.
Time adds years to our life; faith adds life to our years.
Judas heard all Christ's sermons.
We learn from experience that we seldom learn from experience.
Keep your nose to the grindstone, and it'll be too short to put into other people's business.