

Frequently in private conversation I have expressed the fear that this country was destined, in the not too distant future, to follow the paths of our predecessors in history: Cartage, Athens, etc., and by vote of the people, surrender our form of Government. Thus starting on a path of disintegration to oblivion.

Let us look back for a moment into history.

All early civilizations have vanished some few by natural causes, but by far the majority have retrogressed, some to disappear entirely and others to drag on as mere shadows of their former selves and today are without great leaders and seem to be still sinking, possibly into oblivion. I will not try to name them all. Each of you could name several. Let us rather take the example that probably is the best documented and the best known, thanks to Gibbons History, and examine if you will the decline and fall of Rome.

Gibbon designated the era of the five good Emperors ending with Marcus Aurelius in 180 AD as the happiest and most prosperous in the history of the human race.

And yet in this age of peace and security against external attack internal weakness was developing which with the passing of time proved fatal to the existence of the Emperor. At this time capable men began to dodge public office and associated honors. This was caused probably because taxation was mounting and they were, in addition, expected to help their communities by voluntary loans which were seldom repaid.

By the middle of the 2nd century there were cases where individuals had to be drafted to serve as local magistrates and as cities got into financial difficulties the Imperial government took over and cities lost their self government. Sounds like Federal Aid today but let's go on.

This extension of paternalism brought on a tremendous increase in the personnel of the Imperial civil service.

Every bureau expanded. By the end of the 3rd century and I quote 'Trever', "The relentless system of taxation, requisition and compulsory labor was administered by an army of military bureaucrats. Everywhere were the personal agents of the emperors to spy out the remotest case of attempted evasion of taxes." (end of quote)

The causes of this growing burden of taxes were many. The handouts of free food and the Public games ~~which~~ were considered the best means of keeping the proletariat peaceful and contented.

Orinally a very frugal allotment of food was made once a month, by the time of Marcus Aurelius there was a daily distribution of bread, meat, and oil, practically all their food. The gladiatorial combats and other public spectacles cost an estimated equivalent of 1,000 million dollars a year.

Roman financial policy was reduced to creeping inflation. Between the year 1 and reign of Diocletion their coinage dropped 95% in value.

Another reason for their inflation: The cost of the army according to Professor Hardy of the University of Alberta doubled between 100 and 180 AD and this rate kept on increasing.

In consequence and I quote Professor Hardy rather than Gibbon, "The army became composed either of ignorant peasants from the distant part of the empire or of foreigners. In spirit they were wolves with no respect for the fat sheep they were supposed to protect. This divorce between the barbarian army and the soft civilians was the immediate cause of the collapse!!

A period of anarchy in which emperors were destroyed and murdered by the legions preceded the final inundation of Rome by the barbarians. Diocletion brought some temporary order at the end of the 3rd century. He issued an edict fixing prices on all goods, ^{and} all labor under penalty of death, yet prices continued to rise and this supreme last effort was hopeless.

Professor Hardy summed it up: "There was no escape from this relentless regimentation for this was the end result of the abdication of political freedom and of the pursuit of materialism. The welfare state had become a despotism." (end of quote)

Higher taxes, an ever increasing bureaucracy, the growth of an omnipotent state, the paralysis of local initiative a growing reliance on the Central Government that started with what we here in the United States call Federal Aid and ended in despotism.

Does it require much exercise of the imagination to recognize in our own country and in our time that we are walking down the direct road of political mistakes that first sapped and finally brought down the grandeur that was Rome.

This is History. The French Historian, Guizot, once asked James Russel Lowell, "How long will the American Republic endure?" Lowell replied, "As long as the ideas of the men who founded it, continue dominant." What were those ideas? Do they continue dominant in the minds of our citizens?

If a sales clerk gave you too much change would you return it?

I do not believe the answer of this group would be typical. 96% of the people of the United States believe in God, but on a recent survey 72% of the 96% indicated that religion did not affect their Ethics. We simply do not live up to our religion in everyday life. When we drive cars in traffic are we courteous? In business are we all, always honest? Insurance adjusters will tell you that people generally will resort to falsehood and deception to collect claims they do deserve.

The unhappy truth is that the list is endless. We all hurt ourselves and neglect our country by not doing things we should do, by cynicism, by carelessness, by greed. Were these the ideas of our founding fathers? I think our Founders were made of sterner stuff.

We as individuals are deteriorating. The major problem of our time is not External Communism. It is internal discipline. Individual Internal Discipline.

I can not write the thoughts that went thru their minds for you, especially as they wrote the Constitution or as they passed hopeless winter at Valley Forge, but I do know that they never gave up. I have written a code or if it is not sacriligious. 10 commandments, that could be used in our daily life or as a political platform and I do not believe these people who gave birth to our nation would disagree with a majority of my ideas.

We shall adhere to the Republican form of Government.

It would be well to talk less about Democracy and more about the Republic. You can have a Democracy without a Republican form of Government, but you cannot have a Republic without Democracy. Any encyclopedia will give you the trite definition that a pure Democracy requires a country so small that all the people can meet in one place to make their laws, and to choose the men who are to wield authority. The early New England town meeting was the only true Democracy that ever existed on this continent. The essential of a Republic is that the people choose their own officers and hold them responsible. That is the reason that the turning over of so large a part of government to bureaus is a dangerous thing. Bureaus are run by people who are not directly responsible to the voters. Bureaucratic Government if it is extended much more in this country, may imperil the life of the Republic.

#2. We shall keep the system of checks and balances in Government inviolable, allowing no one branch to encroach upon another. The framers of the American Constitution knew it was well to place restraints upon the various branches of Government, thus, the President is held in check by Congress, Congress by the President, and both the Congress and the President are held within the limits of the Constitution by the Supreme Court. If there is need of protecting the President so that Congress may not encroach upon his powers, there is greater need of watchfulness that the President does not usurp the powers of Congress. There has been a tendency in recent years to belittle Congress. To pass uncomplimentary remarks about it, and to create the public opinion that Congress is a sort of necessary evil. The simple truth is, that, Congress is the one bulwark between the American people and the possibility of a dictatorship. For if there should ever be in the Presidency a man both strong and unscrupulous who could usurp the prerogative of Congress, our Republican form of Government would cease to be.

#3. We must remember that a Republic is a Government by Law and not by men. Therefore, it is the duty of Congress to enact, and for the President to approve and enforce, just and equal laws, and it is the duty of every citizen to give due and reverent obedience to all laws. A flippant and irreverent attitude toward law menaces the safety of the Republic.

#4. We shall relegate to oblivion any politician who seeks to ride into office on waves of hate and suspicion.

For the essential unity that constitutes us one people, is a paladium of our liberty, safety, and prosperity. The person, who for political advantage, stirs up racial animosities or religious prejudices or tries to raise section against section or who appeals to a single group, is an enemy of the Republic and should be known as such.

#5. We shall not permit any organized faction to put its will in place of the Nation's. We talk much about protecting the rights of minorities. We should scrupulously protect them, but frequently an organized minority through combinations and pressure methods can elevate to positions of power, selfish and unprincipled men who will try to stay in office by currying political favor with ambitious minorities rather than by serving the whole nation.

#6. We shall keep the practice of discussion alive.

In a Republic the people are the rulers. The persons whom they have chosen to make and enforce their laws are only their servants. Therefore, the people have the right and the duty to discuss it. They must be free to discuss the work of their officials, to criticise it, to tell the officials what to do. And also, to dismiss them if they do not do it. Free discussion is the very breath of life to a Republican form of Government.

#7. We shall endeavor to decrease the functions of the National Government. As previously stated, Bureaucracy should be reduced, and Government, in so far as practical, returned to the smaller political subdivisions where the individual can be more cognizant of what is happening. This applies particularly to taxes and expenditures. No Federal Bureau should decide for instance, whether Holland needs a Harbor. This is a Republic. We the individuals should decide. We the individuals should tax ourselves. We the individuals should build.

#8. We shall preserve a sound economic structure.

Soundness of economic structure requires protection of the traditional right of free enterprise. It demands also that the natural needs of food, clothing and shelter shall be available to its citizens. This means that every one able to work should have an opportunity to do so, and every family should have an opportunity for shelter in which to live.

#9. We shall promote education. And I quote, George Washington, "Promote as an object of primary importance, institutions for the general diffusion of knowledge. In proportion as the structure of a government gives force to public opinion, it is essential that public opinion should be enlightened." (End of Quote) It is only by education, that the people can save themselves from becoming a willing instrument of their own ruin. The American Republic will endure only as long as the ideas of the men who founded it continue dominant.

#10. We shall maintain the spiritual foundations of the Republic. The men who founded this republic believed in spiritual liberty, and they were religious. They believed in freedom of worship. They knew that public morality must restrain ambitious men. The ideas that went into the making of this Republic were the ideas that had been proclaimed from the pulpits of the colonial meeting houses for a hundred years before the Republic was established. If there ever was a day when we needed honesty and integrity in government, it is now. It is striking that the spiritual element which springs from a knowledge of the Bible shows up in all our mortal documents. Let me show you. The first is the Mayflower Compact, and it opens with the words, "in the name of God, Amen." And the writers declare that what they are doing they do for the glory of God. Next is the Constitution of the United States, and in the Constitutional Convention, when it seemed utterly impossible for the delegates to devise any instrument for the more perfect union which they were trying to bring forth, Benjamin Franklin arose and moved that the Convention should be opened each morning with prayer. In George Washington's Farewell Address he says, "of all the dispositions and habits, which lead to political prosperity, religion and morality are indispensable supports. In vain would that man claim the tribute of patriotism, who should labor to subvert these great pillars of human happiness, these firmest props for the duties of men and citizens."

Abraham Lincoln in his second Inagural Address affirms and reaffirms his faith in the justice of his cause and in the righteousness of God. And again, in the last article Woodrow Wilson ever wrote entitled "The Road away From Revolution," He pleads for a Christian conception of justice and he declares that the whole sum of the matter is this, that our civilization cannot survive materially, unless it be redeemed spiritually. It can be saved only by becoming permeated with the Spirit of Christ. Lastly, I come to our own Star Spangled Banner. I wonder how many of you think of this as a religious hymn? Not many. That is because we always sing only the first stanza in Rotary or Kiwanis Clubs, and yet note the last stanza.

"Oh thus be it ever when freeman shall stand
Between their loved homes and war's desolation.
Blest with victory and peace, may the heaven rescued land
Praise the Power that hath made and preserved us a nation.
Then conquer we must, when our cause it is just,
And this be our motto, "In God is our Trust."
And the Star Spangled Banner in triumph shall wave
Over the land of the Free and the Home of the Brave."