

It Is Written

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The Changing Morals In America

By Sewell Hall

There was a time when the leaders of our country unashamedly proclaimed their trust in God. George Washington said, "It is impossible to govern the world without God and the Bible. Of all the dispositions and habits that lead to political prosperity, our religion and morality are the indispensable supporters." Similar quotations from other founding fathers are too numerous to require repetition here. Granted, some of those statements may have been issued for political reasons, but if so it simply demonstrates that these were the sentiments of their constituents.

Romans, Chapter One, All Over Again

"Although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God" (Romans 1:21). Little by little our leaders have spoken less and less of God. It is now insisted that a candidate's religious beliefs and morals should be given no consideration in judging his suitability for office. Under the concept of "separation of church and state" politicians are ridiculed and sometimes rejected if they allow their faith to affect their votes on vital issues. Great universities, established by religious people for the glory of God, have become completely secular and even atheistic. God's name is now so disrespected that it is constantly profaned to express every other human emotion.

"Nor were thankful" (Romans 1:21). In times of crisis, we may stand and sing "God Bless America," but when the crisis is past, God is forgotten. We hear about the American spirit and our resourcefulness and resilience; but how often do we hear thanks given to God? The day that has been set aside for this purpose in our calendar is now more often referred to as "Turkey Day" than as Thanksgiving, and the activities involve more sports and travel than expressions of gratitude.

"Professing to be wise, they became fools" (Romans 1:22). Using the scientific method we have created a marvelous standard of living. But we have been foolish enough to suppose that by human wisdom all truth can be discovered. The result has been an explanation for the existence of man that is neither scientific nor rational and complete ignorance of what lies beyond the grave.

"And changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man" (Romans 1:23). The religion that presently dominates education and philosophy is secular humanism, a religion that makes man the measure of all things. We have "exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator."

"Even their women exchanged the natural use for what is against nature" (Romans 1:26-27). Homosexuality, once an unspeakable sin, has become not only acceptable and respectable but also honored and given special privilege. Even religious institutions have ordained men and women to their clergy; and "same-sex marriage" is being practiced in some states.

As was the case with the ancient Greeks, our nation may be characterized as "being filled with all unrighteousness, sexual immorality, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness, et al (Romans 1:29-31). If anyone considers this an unfair indictment of our generation, just check the morning papers.

"But Look at Our Coins"

Yes, for the time being, our coins retain the motto: "In God We Trust." Mottos, however, do not always represent the true state of things. Whether a nation trusts in God is indicated more by their

actions than by their mottos (Psalms 78:36-37; Isaiah 29:13).

A Call to Self Examination

While we grieve over the decline of faith in our nation, we must remember that faith is a personal thing. The nation trusts in God only to the extent that its citizens trust in God. Those of us who are concerned about national trends need to ask ourselves, "Is my trust truly in God?"

Do I trust His power sufficiently to believe that He did all that Gen. 1 says He did? Do I trust His wisdom sufficiently to do whatever He asks whether I see the necessity of it or not, and to do it as He has directed even though I think some other way would be better? Do I trust His rule in the kingdoms of men sufficiently to accept without anxiety the election of a particular party or candidate? Do I trust His care sufficiently that I can sleep securely at night without a penny in the bank and without a piece of bread in the cupboard, simply because I am seeking "first the kingdom of God and His righteousness" (Matthew 6:33)? Do I trust His providence sufficiently to believe that "all things work together for good to those who love God" (Romans 8:28)? Do I trust His promises sufficiently to say with Paul "For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain" (Philippians 1:21)?

The Mission of the Church: The Perfecting of Saints

By Kyle Campbell

Ephesians 4:12 reveals the threefold work of the church: "For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ." "Perfecting" means "to place the parts of any machine or body in their proper order and to unite them in such a manner as to render the machine or body complete." This indicates then what we call the work of edifying the body — the work of educating or training Christians in right living and acceptable service to God.

The church is edified by the strengthening, growth and development of its members. The purpose of every child of God is to do all things for the purpose of edification (Romans 14:19). The proper objective of its members is not numerical growth alone but the development of spiritual strength (Ephesians 6:10-18). We are no longer to be children tossed by every wind of doctrine (Ephesians 4:14-15). We are no longer babes to be fed on milk (Hebrews 5:12-14). We must grow in godliness and ability to overcome temptation and lead pure lives. We must establish our hearts unblameable in holiness (1 Thessalonians 3:13). We must build up ourselves on our most holy faith (Jude 17-23). We must resist the devil and draw nigh to God (James 4:7-10).

The congregation may edify its members through worship (Hebrews 10:25; 1 Peter 2:5; Colossians 3:16), faithful teaching, proper discipline (Titus 3:10; 1 Corinthians 5:1-13; Romans 16:17-18) and proper love and consideration of the members one for another (Ephesians 4:29-32; Philippians 2:3-4; 4:2; 1 Corinthians 3:3; 12:25).