

Things Are Bad, But --

by Robert Turner [reprint from *Plain Talk*, April, 1975]

The J.W.'s, radio prophets, and other cultists, rely heavily upon our tendency to agree with pessimistic appraisals of current events, and dire predictions for the future. Shock the next prophet of doom who comes knocking at your door. When he begins to talk about crime rates remind him that much of this is the side effect of our emphasis upon individual freedom. Ask him if he wants to go back to the serf and feudal lord system. He will say, But our morals are so low — and you can say that national morals have a way of swinging up and down — that saints are in but not of the world. Anyhow, things are nothing like as bad as in the Middle Ages. If he thinks our government is corrupt cite a few cases from the deterioration of the Roman Empire.

While he is staggering, tell him how the early Teutons would open a man's belly, tie one end of his intestine to a post, and make him circle it until he unwound himself. (All in fun of course — real good joke.) If he hasn't fainted, tell him about the tortures of the Inquisition, when governments used trial by thumb screws, rack, and fire. A man was guilty as charged unless he could drink hot oil without harm, or walk through fire. Our courts are better than that. Things are always bad enough to challenge our efforts to improve. An honest look at ourselves may show us where particular attention is needed. But do not lend your wail to doom criers who use this wedge to open your heart for their brand of medicine. Ask the man who thinks times are so bad, how he is getting along. It is amazing how bad the whole can be even while the parts are prospering. Maybe the past is better because it is past. And as your dark cloud gathers his tracts to leave, sing him this song:

**Granddad, viewing earth's worn cogs,
Said things were going to the dogs.
His granddad, in his house of logs,
Said things were going to the dogs.
His granddad, in old Ireland's bogs,
Said things were going to the dogs.
His granddad, in his old skin togs,
Said things were going to the dogs.
—CHORUS—
So there's one thing I have to state,
The dogs have had a good long wait.**

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