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## THERE WAS A TIME WHEN...

By Duane V. Maxey

"Remember **the days of old**, consider the years of many generations: ask thy father, and he will show thee; thy elders, and they will tell thee" (Deuteronomy 32:7).

God's people are admonished to recall and reflect upon the past, and to draw from those remembrances those things that will help them to live better, and more holy, lives. I think that now is a good time for all Americans to reflect upon "the days of old" and to learn what they should about where we are as compared to where we were. Some of us who were born prior to World War II -- some of us who have conversed with grandparents born before the 20th Century -- realize that things changed dramatically between 1850 and 1950, and that even more astonishing changes have occurred from 1950 to the dawn of 21st Century America in the year 2001. **There was a time...**

### 01 -- When Sunday Was A Day Of Worship And Rest.

The weekly hubbub stopped. Stores were closed. Church bells rang, calling people to the House of God. Sunday was honored as that special time when Americans fed their souls and rested their bodies, and those who did not attend church services at least respected those who did. On the Lord's Day, unnecessary business was frowned upon, and sometimes those who violated that one day in seven were even prosecuted with a zeal like that of Nehemiah, who wrote: "In those days saw I in Judah some treading wine presses on the sabbath, and bringing in sheaves, and lading asses; as also wine, grapes, and figs, and all manner of burdens, which they brought into Jerusalem on the sabbath day: and I testified against them in the day wherein they sold victuals" (Neh 13:15).

When the Lord's Day was thus honored in our land, there was less disturbance and more tranquillity in America. A nation that **WILL NOT REST** is always doomed to become a nation that **CANNOT REST!** -- for "the wicked are like the troubled sea, when

it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt" (Isaiah 57:20). Also, a nation that is too busy for God is a nation whose turbulent "waters" are sure to "cast up" immoral filth and dirt -- and that is precisely what has happened in America. Never have Americans been more restless or more dirty! **Also, there was a time...**

## **02 -- When Folks Were Not In Such A Rush.**

They did not fly at supersonic speeds; they did not drive like Jehu, of whom it was written "he driveth furiously" (2 Kings 9:20). Yes, there was probably some "road rage" in the form of a whip-crack to hasten the team of horses, but there were no pistol-cracks to kill those going less than 65 in the right-lane. People walked to church, walked to work, rode a horse, or got there in a buggy -- never exceeding 20 miles an hours -- but somehow, everything necessary still got done! Today, we have become a nation of "Mad-Hatters" whose impatient cry is perpetually: **"I'm late, I'm late, for a very important date! Hello! Good-bye, Good-bye, Hello! I'm late, I'm late, I'M LATE!"**

I remember attending First Grade at the country school in North Dakota where my mother taught. There was a horse-barn out behind the school-house, and the big yellow school-buses were not even dreamed of, let alone seen! With the millions of cars and trucks now constantly filling and speeding down our nations roadways day and night, Nahum's ancient prophecy seems to be having its modern and striking fulfillment: "The chariots shall rage in the streets, they shall jostle one against another in the broad ways: they shall seem like torches, they shall run like the lightnings" (Nahum 2:4). Never have men gotten there faster with less reason to go!

When the fleet-footed Ahimaaz was determined to outrun Cushie, "Joab said, Wherefore wilt thou run, my son, seeing that thou hast no tidings ready?" (2 Samuel 18:22). Ahimaaz wanted to run, even if it did no real good, and even so, at this "time of the end," millions are thus fulfilling Daniel 12:4 "Many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased." We have masses of speeding travelers -- going a lot and knowing a lot, but going where they should not go and knowing what they should not know. What a time it is for the Christian to heed the admonitions: "he that believeth shall not make haste" and "run with patience the race that is set before [you]" (Isa. 28:16; Heb. 12:1). **Then too, there was a time...**

## **03 -- When Modesty and Decency Were Esteemed As Virtues.**

The picture with this article shows women with clothing that came down to their ankles, and likewise is seen, a man with a bald head walking toward the church. There was a day when a bald-headed man was more embarrassed in public than many today who now vulgarly and brazenly parade themselves in various degrees of public nudity! Worse yet, countless thousands of those who are guilty of what is really "indecent exposure" in public are professed Christians! Let me tell you something folks, GOD HATES PUBLIC NUDITY! When John the Revelator gazed upon the glorified Christ, he saw "in the midst of the seven candlesticks," One who was **"clothed with a garment down to the foot.."** (Rev. 1:13). Christ's attire should, and does, serve as an example

of how He wants His people to clothe themselves: **"in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety"** (1 Tim. 2:9). Everyone -- and especially Christians -- should so cover their nakedness in public as to be **modest in God's sight!**

The NIV translates "with shamefacedness and sobriety" as "with decency and propriety." One who is really ashamed of violating God's command in this matter will dress "with shamefacedness" or "decency" -- and one who considers the matter of his or her dress "with sobriety" will dress "with propriety" as God defines "propriety". He, or she, who throws off the matter of how to dress in public as of little importance clearly demonstrates a total lack of both "shamefacedness" and "sobriety," but be ye assured of this: At the Judgment, those guilty of enticing others into lust and immorality through their careless and immodest attire **WILL THEN CONSIDER THE MATTER WITH THE UTMOST "SOBRIETY" -- but too late!**

"Birds of a feather flock together." I once read or heard the story of a pet Parrot who got out of his cage and starting flying with the crows. Once, when they landed in a corn patch, the farmer spied them and discharged a shot-gun blast at them. As the frightened Parrot flew away, he said: "Bad Company! Bad Company!" Those who keep company with the wrong crowd are endangered merely by being among them, but it is even worse when professed Christians are so mingled with the world as to even look identical to them! In fact, they **are** identical, both inwardly and outwardly.

When God looked down on professed, but backslidden, Israel He once declared: "They have corrupted themselves, **their spot is not the spot of his children:** they are a perverse and crooked generation" (Deut. 32:5). When gazing upon them, God saw no difference between Israel and the world. The KJV translates it: "their spot is not the spot of his children" and the NIV translates this same statement: **"to their shame they are no longer his children."** Outward appearance DOES MATTER TO GOD! Yes, it is true that the Bible says "man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart" (1 Sam. 16:7). Nevertheless, because they are so within, real Parrots don't look like crows! and don't flock with crows, and I firmly believe that when God looks down upon millions of semi-nude professing Christians today He full well sees and knows that **"their spot is not the spot of his children"** and **"to their shame they are no longer his children."** Selah. Finally, there was a time...

## **04 -- When Young People Were More Teachable.**

According to God's Word, Pride will increase more and more in the last days. We are even now living in the time prophesied in Isaiah 3:5 when "the child shall behave himself proudly against the ancient, and the base against the honourable." Never before has there been such a generation of young "know-it-alls" as we have today! The Bible says: "Inquire... of the former age, and prepare thyself to the search of their fathers" (Job 8:8). Young people, try to **learn from your forbears -- and WHY?** Here is the answer: **"For we are but of yesterday, and know nothing, because our days upon**

**earth are a shadow"** (Job 8:9), if you inquire of your elders, "Shall not they teach thee?" (Job 8:10).

The multitude of impudent young punks sounding off today is appalling! -- but certainly not appealing -- to those who have good sense! Abandoning the supposedly "old-fogey notions" of their elders, millions of today's youth think their elders "had it all wrong"! As many of them see it:-- Washington and the Pioneer Patriots of America were all wrong! Those who guided our nation to victory through the perils of World War II were all wrong! Democracy is all wrong! The Bible is all wrong! Christians values are all wrong! Christ was deluded, and nothing more than a mere man -- so they think!

Listen to me, young "know it all": YOU ARRIVED ON THIS EARTH "BUT OF YESTERDAY"! You really "know nothing" yet as you ought to know it (1 Cor. 8:2). Just who do you think you are? in proudly elevating your knowledge and your judgment above those who have been living and learning long decades in advance of you! It takes more than a diploma from high school and college to know what really matters in this world! The older you get, the wiser your father may grow in your eyes, even though now you dismiss his "old-fogey notions" as totally outdated! "Too soon we grow old, and too late we grow smart" is more than a cliché or maxim -- it is often a grievous fact! If you don't think so now, you will later.

Listen also to God's Infallible Word, young agnostic, atheist, or disbeliever in the Bible: "Shall he that contendeth with the Almighty instruct him? he that reproveth God, let him answer it" (Job 40:2). The NIV translates this same verse: "Will the one who contends with the Almighty correct him? Let him who accuses God answer him!" What immeasurably inflated pride they have, whose "**days upon earth are a shadow**," to think themselves possessed of enough knowledge to refute the declarations of the **ETERNAL GOD!**

Our national airwaves are littered with young "know-it-all" talk-show hosts who give out advice completely contrary to God's Word. Obviously, they think they know more than God Himself, when the fact is that they are ignorant and pitifully blind, leaders of the blind. Just yesterday, I heard one who was protesting against the necessity of speaking the phrase "under God" when reciting the pledge of allegiance to our flag. With utter disdain, he labeled the teachings of Christ as "dung". The conservative host cut him off the air -- as well he should have been, for the swollen pride of his arrogance was every bit as malignant as the pratings of Osama Bin Laden, and probably worse!

St. Peter declared that when such as he "speak great swelling words of vanity, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, through much wantonness, those that were clean escaped from them who live in error" (2 Peter 2:18). Probably millions of today's intractable and unteachable generation of young people will themselves be cast off into the dunghill of damnation forever -- unless they repent of that unteachableness. One has

written: "Would you lead? Your wish is hollow, till at first you learn to follow." True, so true!

To a world that is frenzied, frightened, and freighted with care, and to a generation that knows far less than it thinks, Jesus still beckons: "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are **heavy laden**, and I will give you **rest**. Take my yoke upon you, and **learn of me**; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find **rest unto your souls**. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light" (Matt. 11:28-30).

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**THE END**