

A Gentler Time

by Wayne Goff

David McCullough wrote a biography of former President Harry S. Truman, from Independence, Missouri. The description of his early childhood is a "snapshot" of how society in midwest America was back in 1895. While not everything was "ideal," it is proper to read about how Mr. Truman's morals were developed. With that in mind, I offer an excerpt from the book for your consideration.

TRUMAN

"Certain precepts and bywords were articles of faith in such a place, and nearly everybody growing up there was imbued with them: Honesty is the best policy. If at first you don't succeed, try, try again. 'Never never give up,' Harry's father would say.

"Children were a reflection of their parents. 'Now Harry, you be good,' his mother would say time after time as he went out the door.

"He appears never to have questioned such dictates. 'In those days,' he would remember, 'right was right and wrong was wrong, and you didn't have to talk about it.'

"Many of the guidelines came directly from the Bible: *Honor thy father and mother A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches.* From Sunday School and his own reading of the Bible, Harry knew many passages by heart: *Ye are the salt of the earth Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works.*

"Say what you mean, mean what you say, he was taught at home. Keep your word. Never get too big for your britches. Never forget a friend. They were more than words to the wise; they were bedrock. Not everyone lived up to them, of course, but to Harry it seemed everyone ought to try."

Today

Our country's morals have been turned upside down today and it is difficult for our children to know right from wrong – *fornication* is "free love" or "living together;" *abortion* is "a woman's choice," *homosexuality* is "gay," and *marriage* is being redefined by federal judges against the very wishes of the common people. Rather than *judge with righteous judgment* (Jn. 7:24), we are being told "don't be judgmental." "Everything is okay" in this New Age environment, and moral absolutes are touted as a thing of the past.

This is nothing new. In every *decaying* society, man has rejected Divine authority. Moses taught Israel, "*You shall not at all do as we are doing here today – every man doing whatever is right in his own eyes*" (Deut. 12:8). In the days of the Judges, that was exactly what Israel was doing – whatever was right in their own eyes (Judges 17:6; 21:25).

Eventually, the nation was destroyed because "*they mocked the messengers of God, despised His words, and scoffed at His prophets, until the wrath of the Lord arose against His people, till there was no remedy*" (2 Chron. 36:16). Note again the words: "*till there was no remedy.*" God is exceedingly patient with people and nations (see 2 Pet. 3:9), but when in His omniscient wisdom He knew that there was no solution, then the nation was destroyed.

Turning Back The Clock

There are many, many good people and good families in America still. Many parents repeat the words of Harry Truman's childhood. The Lord's church preaches and teaches in its Bible classes the same rock-solid moral foundation. But it seems to be more difficult to follow today because of the ever-changing world around us. But brethren, parents, and children, **do not despair**. Do what is right, and God will see and bless you! "*Every way of a man is right in his own eyes, but the LORD weighs the hearts*" (Prov. 21:2). Self-approval is deceitful. It is hard to see ourselves as others see us, much less as God sees us! So God has given us a **mirror**: "*But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does*" (James 1:25). Keep your eye on the goal of heaven. "*And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart*" (Gal. 6:9).

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