

“The Good Old Days”

by Wayne Goff

In 1986, Joseph Bayly wrote in **Eternity Magazine** about some things he read in some 1886 issues of *New England Magazine* about life a hundred years earlier. Notice some of these quotes:

“There is a growing tendency with our New England people to make rest and recreation matters of considerable importance in themselves. Business is driven at a greater speed than it used to be, and an annual relaxation from business or professional care and toils has become a positive necessity.”

On the state of marriage in New England in 1886:

“The statistics of marriage as compared with population, would seem to indicate that there is an increasing unwillingness on the part of men or women, or of both, to take upon themselves the responsibilities of wedded life. Whether because of the increased expense of living due to the development of luxurious tastes, and the selfishness which results, or the difficulties in the way of securing remuneration and constant employment, or because of others means, [matrimony] seems to have lost something of its former power. [There may be] cowardice in this matter.”

On public school teaching at the time:

“A very large part of our free education system is devoted to teaching the principles of Nihilism, the absurdness of evolution, the crudities of [present day] philosophy. Of what use is it to read the Bible in the morning [in classes] and teach in the afternoon that the Bible is a poor fiction. This is what many common schools and free educational institutions are doing.”

A paraphrase of the Bible was being criticized in 1886:

“In Scriptures, Hebrew and Christian, the task has been undertaken of rendering the Bible narrative in a form which shall be convenient and readable for young readers. Such an idea does not wholly please us, for it does not seem possible to rewrite the sacred history without losing the spirit of the close translation from the Hebrew and Greek.”

Some things never change! *“That which has been is what will be, that which is done is what will be done, and there is nothing new under the sun. Is there anything of which it may be said, ‘See, this is new’? It has already been in ancient times before us. There is no remembrance of former things, nor will there be any remembrance of things that are to come by those who will come after.”* — Ecclesiastes 1:9-11

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