

Bible Study Lectures

“I proved the prophecies. They cover all the earth’s surface-’every nation and tribe and tongue and people’-and all time until its close; and in all its predictions I have never found a mistake. The fulfillment of prophecy, therefore, is the one outstanding reason why I believe the Bible. If you had been reared an infidel, would not these tested prophecies convince you that the Bible is what it claims to be? They convinced me. They have convinced many others.”

Mr. Mitchell stated that he had been trained from childhood to believe, and therefore he preferred to cite the experience of those who had been trained to disbelieve but later made a thorough examination of the Scriptures, and found that to be honest they had to acknowledge the Bible to be the Word of God. He promised to distribute free of charge the publication from which he read this experience to those who so requested.

A concluding experience was cited from H. L. Hastings’s work, “Will The Old Book Stand?” page 20. Hastings writes: “Years ago I talked with an infidel in Plymouth, Massachusetts, and he wanted me to give him some evidence that the Bible was true. After some conversation, I lent him a little volume, an abridgement of “Keith on Prophecy.’ Some ten years after, as I took my seat in a railway train, he came and sat down beside me and began to talk, and he said: ‘If you want that book, you can have it; but no one else can have it at any price.’ It had knocked his infidelity into atoms, and he was a believer in Christ, and a member of the church.”

05. THE WITNESS OF SCEPTICS

The witness of skeptics to the truth of the Bible was the subject of an address given by Pastor Mitchell in the Naval Hall on Thursday night. It was stated that the Bible contained at least fifty clear-cut predictions concerning the land of Syria, over forty of Babylon, and that at Samaria, Chaldea, Egypt, Ashkelon, Caanan, Amman, Lebanon, Tyre and other nations, countries, cities, and towns were the subject of definite Bible prophecies all couched in plain language that could not be misunderstood, and that time had proved them to be fulfilled to an exactitude.

Mr. Mitchell stated that it was unnecessary to appeal to existing facts to know the truth of these prophecies, and, lest skeptics should question the truthfulness of his witnesses, he would depend for his historical facts principally upon skeptical travelers and writers, such as C. F. Volney, the learned French skeptical writer, and others.

Many prophecies were cited, and quotations from modern writers were read “to show that existing conditions are identical with what the Scriptures foretold,” said the speaker.

Among other pictures of Syria Isaiah 32:14 was cited: “The forts and towers shall be dens for ever.” Then the following was read from Volney’s, “Travels” page 336 “At every step we met with ruins of towers, dungeons, and castles with fosses. Frequently inhabited by Jackals, owls, and scorpions.”

Jeremiah 26: 18 was cited as predicting: “Zion shall be ploughed like a field.” The record of the truth of this prophecy was cited from the historian Gibbon, Volume IV, page 100: “After the final destruction of the temple by the armies of Titus and Hadrian, a ploughshare was drawn over the consecrated ground as a sign of perpetual interdiction!”

Richardson in his “Travels” was also cited as saying: “At the time when I visited this sacred spot [Mount Zion], one part of it supported a crop of barley; another was undergoing the labor of the plough.”

It was stated that Volney in his “Travels,” Volume 2, page 338, refers to the, “deserted ruins of Azkalan.” Zephaniah 2:4 was read: “Ashkelon shall be a desolation,” and Zechariah 9:5, “Ashkelon shall not be inhabited.”

THE WITNESS OF BABYLON

Speaking of Babylon, it was shown from Isaiah and Jeremiah that Babylon, then in the height of her glory, would “become heaps,” that there would be “nothing of her left,” that she would be utterly destroyed. What is the witness of those who have visited that part of the world? It was asked. The following were cited: “Vast heaps constitute all that now remains of ancient Babylon.” (Keppel’s “Narrative,” Vol. I, page 196) “Nothing is now left but heaps of earth and fragments of brick,” was cited from Mi gnan’s “Travels,” pages 199, 200.

Another prophecy concerning Babylon was read from Isaiah 13:20: “It shall never be inhabited, neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation; neither shall the Arabian pitch tent there. Neither shall the shepherds make their fold there.” Mr. Mitchell commented on this daring prophecy; but he

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declared that those who had traveled there bore witness to the truth of every point of it. Many explorers and excavators of recent years reported that it was impossible to get Arabs to remain on the site of that ancient city overnight. From Mignan's "Travels" it was shown that, though he was accompanied to that site by six Arabs fully armed, he could not induce them to remain after the sun began to set, "from apprehension of evil spirits."

Mr. Mitchell pointed out that the American who coined the word agnostic for himself, Thomas Huxley, after criticizing the Bible during the greater part of his life, saw some value in it towards the end of his life. A quotation from Huxley's "Science and Education," page 398, was read: "By the study of what other book could children be so much humanized and made to feel that each figure in that vast historical procession fills, like them selves, but a momentary space in the interval between two eternities; and earns the blessings or the curses of all time, according to its effort to do good and hate evil?"

DOMINANT FIGURE IN HISTORY

The well-known modern historian, H. G. Wells, was quoted, from writings he had published in the "American Magazine" of 1922, as saying: "Jesus of Nazareth is easily the dominant figure in history. Now it is interesting and significant, isn't it? that a historian setting forth in that spirit, without any theological bias whatever, should find that he simply cannot portray the progress of humanity honestly without giving the foremost place to a penniless Teacher from Nazareth. More than nineteen hundred years later, a historian like myself, who does not even call himself a Christian, finds the picture centering irresistibly around the life and character of this simple, lovable Man.

"So the historian, disregarding the theological significance of His life, writes the name of Jesus of Nazareth at the top of the world's greatest characters."

Another prominent character quoted as testifying at least in a portion of his writings was W. H. L. Mencken, editor of the American Mercury, and author of a number of very modernly rationalistic books. From his book, published in 1930, "Treatise on the Gods," the following was read: "The historicity of Jesus is no longer questioned seriously by anyone, whether believer or unbeliever. The main facts about Him seem to be beyond dispute.

"The Bible is unquestionably the most beautiful book in the world. Allow everything you please—no other literature, old or new, can offer a match to it.

"Nearly all of it comes from the Jews, and their making of it constitutes one of the most astounding phenomena in human history. I incline to believe that the scene recounted in John 8:3-11 is the most poignant drama ever written in the world, as the Song of Solomon is unquestionably the most moving love song, and the twenty-third psalm the greatest of hymns.

"All these transcendent riches Christianity inherits from a tribe of sedentary bedouins, so obscure and unimportant that secular history scarcely knows them. No heritage of modern man is richer and none has made a more brilliant mark upon human thought, not even the legacy of the Greeks.

"The story of Jesus is touching beyond compare. It is indeed the most lovely story ever devised. Beside it the best that you will find in sacred literature of Moslem and Brahman, Parsee and Buddhist, seems flat, stale, and unprofitable."

Much more could be quoted from those two writers, Wells and Mencken, Mr. Mitchell stated, and they were men living today, who did not claim to be Christians, but gave their honest testimony to what they saw of value in the sacred writings of the Book we call the Holy Bible.

06. INFIDELITY CHALLENGED

Bible stakes claim to credence on prophetic accuracy.

A LECTURE delivered in the Naval Hall on Sunday night on the subject, "Infidelity Challenged and Refuted," was out of the ordinary in that some of the audience availed themselves of the opportunity of interjecting during the address, according to, the special privilege extended by the speaker in welcoming any question or statement relevant to the subject during the lecture.

In his opening remarks, Pastor Mitchell said. "I do not challenge infidelity or infidels; nor do I expect to refute infidels nor infidelity. Nevertheless doubters will be challenged and skepticism refuted, but not by me. The scoffers and unbelievers of today were challenged, and refuted, many hundreds of years ago, by One infinitely wiser than I. It will be my part to set before you certain facts. You will be given an