

## Bible Study Lectures

"Probably you will be surprised to know that the agnostic envies you your faith in God, your settled belief in a heaven after death, and your blessed assurance that you will meet with your loved ones in an after life in which there will be neither sorrow nor pain. He would give anything to be able to embrace that faith and be comforted by it.

"For him there is only the grave and the persistence of matter. As he can see beyond the grave is the disintegration of the protoplasm and psychoplasm of which his body and its personality are composed.

"But in this material view I find no ecstasy nor happiness. Is this the end of all human life and endeavor? Therefore would I try to convey to your mind and heart something of the wistfulness and loneliness of the man who does not believe in God.

"Your agnostic may put on a brave front and face life with heroic smiles. But he is not happy-standing in awe and reverence before the vastness and majesty of the universe, knowing not whence he came nor why, appalled by the stupendous vastness of space and the infinitude of time, humiliated by the infinite smallness of himself, cognizant of his frailty, his weakness and brevity, think you not that he, too, sometimes yearns for a staff on which to lean? He, too, carries a cross.

"Your agnostic is tremendously impressed by the power of your faith. He has seen drunkards and libertines and moral degenerates transformed by it. He has seen the sick, the aged, and the friendless comforted and sustained by it. And he is impressed by your wonderful charities, your asylums, your hospitals, your nurseries, your schools. He must shamefacedly admit that agnostics, as such, have built few hospitals, and few homes for orphans.

"To him this earth is but a tiny raft adrift upon the unfathomable waters of eternity, with no horizon in sight. His heart aches for every precious life on the raft, drifting, drifting, whither no one for a certainty knows.

"You have met one of the most lonesome and most unhappy individuals on earth."

### A DESPAIRING CRY

"What then has the infidel to offer?" asked Mr. Mitchell. "Mr. Saunders has given you the answer. But I now ask you to listen to the words of another whose name will be more familiar to your ear. I refer to the renowned skeptic, Robert Ingersoll. In the face of the majesty of death, at the graveside of a dearly loved brother, the veil of the mind was torn aside, and he uttered those famous words that have circled the earth: 'Whether in mid-sea or among the breakers of the farther shore, a wreck must mark at last the end of each and all. And every life, no matter if its every hour is rich with love and every moment jeweled with joy, will, at its close, become a tragedy, as sad, and deep, and dark as can be woven of the warp and woof of mystery and death. Life is a narrow vale between two eternities. We strive in vain to look beyond the heights. We cry aloud, and the only answer is the echo of our wailing cry.'

The preacher in closing contrasted this with the bright hope of the resurrection, and eternal life through the Christ of Christianity.

## 11. FROM NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S KINGDOM TO CHRIST'S

"From 603 BC to Eternity," was the subject of an arresting prophetic lecture sermon delivered by Pastor Mitchell in the Naval Hall on Sunday night. He commenced with an interesting question:-

"How many here this evening would undertake the task of writing the outstanding world events, including the rise and fall of empires, for 2,500 years in advance? Such a remarkably brief, yet comprehensive history in advance would command the thoughtful attention of the most profound scholar," said Pastor Mitchell. "Just such a remarkable prophetic composition exists. It was written shortly after the establishment of the mighty Babylonian empire, 603 BC. Our time tonight will surely be well spent, for we are now to study this astounding superhuman literary phenomenon.

"More than one historian has found difficulty in recording history briefly. When young Prince Zemir succeeded his father on the throne of Persia he summoned an assembly of his most learned men, to prepare for him a history of the world, so that he, as ruler, might be guided by the wisdom of the past.

"After twenty years the learned men with a caravan of twelve camels, each bearing five hundred volumes, came into the presence of the king. Their secretary made a short speech and presented the 6,000 volumes. The king, fully occupied with the affairs of state, expressed his gratitude. But he said, 'I am now middle aged, and even if I live to be old, I shall not have time to read such a long history. Abridge it!'

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"Twenty more years, then three camels bore 1,500 volumes, to the king; but the king said, 'I am now a n old man. Abridge further, and with all possible speed! After the lapse of ten years, a young elephant carried their abbreviated work, this time of 500 volumes. 'This time we have been exceedingly brief,' they said. 'Not yet sufficiently so', replied the king. My life is almost over. Abridge again!' But when, after five years passed in the fourth laborious attempt, the secretary returned alone, walking with crutches, leading a small ass, whose load was one book, the king was dying and could not read it.

### HISTORY IN ADVANCE

"Now where do you suppose we will find the 213 world history in advance? There is but one book whose writings have peered into the future, millenniums ahead. We now turn to that Book which revels in the humbly impossible, finding the composition worthy of the study of sages, in the Book of Daniel, chapter 2.

"Our message is the interpretation by a prophet of God, of a God-given dream to King Nebuchadnezzar at the time when his kingdom, Babylon, held universal sway. After the failure of the other wise men of the kingdom to retell and interpret the dream, Daniel is seen coming in before the king. He bears a God-received explanation stating, 'There is a God in heaven that revealed secrets and makes known . . . what shall be in the latter days.' This message, then, reaches right on to our time, 'the latter days.' That is why I am interested, and call your attention to it at this time.

"Daniel reminded the king that the subject of the dream, which had so disturbed his peace of mind that he had threatened death if the wise men failed to explain it, was a huge metallic image. The image was composed of a head of gold, breast and arms of silver, sides of brass, legs of iron, and feet of mingled iron and clay. Then the whole image is broken to pieces by a stone, 'cut out without hands.' The stone then develops, and fills the whole earth. 'This is the dream; and we will tell the interpretation thereof,' said Daniel.

"Daniel starts with the golden head, representing Nebuchadnezzar's empire. With the words of Daniel 2:38 - addressed to the king of Babylon, 'You art this head of gold,' Daniel foretells the rise and fall of kingdoms, of mighty monarchies, right up to the time of the establishment of the kingdom of God in this world, as recorded in verse 44. Just 213 words from the kingdom of Babylon established in 603 BC to the time of the establishment of the eternal kingdom after the coming of Christ.

"The prophecy outlined four monarchies that would hold universal supremacy. The fourth, unlike the first three, was to disintegrate into ten lesser kingdoms. True to prophecy, Babylon ruled from 608 to 538 BC, when it was displaced by the Medo-Persian kingdom. The Medo-Persian empire held dominant sway from 538-331 BC.

### GREECE TO THE FORE

"Then Alexander the Great led the Grecian armies to conquest after conquest, till the recognized civilized world lay bleeding at his feet. Greece held world dominance from 331 to 168 BC. In 168 BC Rome seized the scepter, and held world sway right through the time of the birth of the Savior and His ministry on to AD 475.

"The ten toes of the feet represent the ten divisions into which the fourth kingdom was to be divided. Rome was not subjugated as was the previous universal monarchies; but, true to the prophecy, it was divided, and into exactly ten kingdoms. The list of these ten kingdoms is given by the historian Gibbon as the Alemanni, Franks, Burgundians, Vandals, Suevi, Visigoths, Saxons, Ostrogoths, Lombards, and the Heruli. The Franks are the French, the Alemanni the Germans, Anglo-Saxons the English, Suevi the Portuguese, Visigoths the Spaniards, Burgundians the Swiss, Lombards the Lombards and Italians.

"According to the prophecy, these kingdoms will never be united. 'They shall mingle themselves with the seed of men, but they shall not cleave one to another.' Daniel 2:43. Many have attempted to unite Europe as in the days of Caesar, but every attempt has failed. Napoleon could never understand why he lost the battle of Waterloo on June 1815.

To the end of his days he would say, 'But I should have won that battle.' When asked to account for his victory, the Duke, remembering the odds that were against him, replied in awed tones, 'the hand of God was upon me.' The French also recognize the fact that an unseen power overruled at Waterloo.

"The same thing happened at the time of the Great War from 1914 to 1918. The miracle of that war was that at the time of its commencement, the strongest fighting machine of all time, the cream of

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Germany's und efeated arm i es, failed t o p ass b eyond th e th in Allied lin es th at were w orn dow n with ceaseless fighting.

### PROPHECY FULFILLED

"Every feature of this prophecy has been correctly fulfilled except the closing part of it as mentioned in verse 44, 'And in the-days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever.' just as each detail of the prophecy has been fulfilled to date, just so surely will Christ return, 'and consume all these kingdoms,' and establish the kingdom of God on this earth."

## 12. OUR AGE OF MARVELS; ITS WARNING MESSAGE

"WE are living in an age of wonders. In fact so many marvelous inventions have suddenly come into existence that we have almost ceased to wonder. Our ancestors of a century ago, or even fifty years ago, lived in a different world. Were they to arise today and be transported to the great centers of our busy world, they surely would wonder which of the planets they were visiting. They would hardly dream that this was the planet on which they had spent their lives. The nineteenth century was an age of wonders, and the twentieth is an age of greater marvels, with less wonder." Thus spoke Pastor Mitchell when introducing his subject, "Our Age of Marvels, and Its Warning Message," in the Naval Hall on Sunday night.

A statement from the Scientific American, fiftieth anniversary edition, published toward the close of the nineteenth century, July 25, 1896, was read: "The material world has advanced so rapidly during the last half century, and with a pace so accelerated, that mankind has almost lost one of its most important faculties and one essential to happiness—that of surprise—the most marvelous developments are taken as a matter of course. The condition of things fifty years ago is seldom pictured to the mind; and all the material blessings which we now enjoy are used as conveniences of daily life, and no more. Notwithstanding the pages of matter and quantities of illustrations, we feel that the task of telling about the progress of a lifetime can at least be only inadequately performed so much has been done."

Mr. Mitchell questioned: "What did this mean? Why did the world continue for nearly 6,000 years, and then all of a sudden blaze out into an era of marvelous invention and knowledge? Why have all the marvels of invention come in one unique era? Why were not some of these things seen in former ages? Early in the nineteenth century, after the origin of the steamboat in 1807, and the first railway service (from Stockton to Darlington, England) in 1825, men were so amazed that they thought the acme of all invention had been reached.

"Listen to the following incident recorded in the Scientific American of October 15, 1915: 'Someone poring over the old files in the United States Patents Office at Washington the other day found a letter written in 1833 that illustrates the limitations of the human imagination. It was an old employee of the Patents Office, offering his resignation to the head of the department. His reason was that as everything inventable had been invented, the Patents Office would soon be discontinued, and there would be no further need of his services, or the services of any of his fellow clerks. He therefore decided to leave before the blow fell.'

### SCIENTIFIC ACHIEVEMENTS

"But what marvels has the world produced since then? Here is a statement that, 'Recently the 1,90,000th patent of the United States was issued' Here are a few of the thousands of the scientific accomplishments of the past century, as outlined in the book, 'Is the End Near?' by John L. Shuler:-

"Ocean steamship in 1838; electric railway in 1889; automobile about 1890; airplane, first successful flying, December 17, 1903. The story of the advance in communication has been marked out in this wise: First successful telegraph line in 1844, first ocean cable 1858, telephone in 1876, wireless telegraphy in 1896, transcontinental telephone in 1915, radio broadcasting in 1921, telephotography in 1924, radio beam wireless in 1926, transatlantic wireless telephone in 1926.

"Some of the principal inventions and discoveries of modern times in the fields of medicine, industry, and business are as follows: Anesthesia by ether in 1846, by chloroform in 1848, X-ray in 1895,