

Bible Study Lectures

Where peace and joy shall fill the soul,
And sorrows never come.”

J. M. Hopkins.

19. CHRIST’S RETURN-WHY IS IT NECESSARY?

THE Reason for Christ’s Return, the third of a series of lectures on the second coming of Christ, was delivered by Pastor Mitchell in the Naval Hall on Wednesday night. He said:

“I have met and conversed with many people who are not concerned whether Christ returns or not. In fact I have been asked what need existed for His return. The simple fact is that those who are not concerned as to whether Christ returns or not, have no conception of the supreme importance of this colossal event in the divine plan of salvation.

A MIGHTY EVENT

“Bible writers and the most profound students and servants of God through the ages have viewed this event as the hope of the church, and rightly so. Why, one’s eternal destiny depends on events which synchronize with the coming of Christ. Those now dead will not be resurrected till the blast of the trumpet is heard at the coming of the Redeemer. The living saints will not be translated till then. Furthermore, sin with all its heart-rending consequences will run its course till then. Regardless of all the most laudable and raise worthy efforts at reform in economic conditions, poverty, hunger, malnutrition, sickness, untimely deaths from malignant diseases, the falling tear and the heavy heart, and a thousand other miseries, that all right-thinking persons must long to see banished from the universe, will continue till the time of the second coming of Jesus. War with all its ghastly and diabolical deeds of hate and wrong, and its indescribable agonies of suffering humanity, will not cease till His Majesty, the Prince of Peace, is actually seen coming again.

“At the coming of Jesus, the war trumpet, now echoing in the hills summoning man against man and nation against nation, will give place to the trumpet blast from the skies, calling the sleeping saints to arise from their dusty beds. It will announce the moment when ‘this mortal must put on immortality’ and the living and resurrected saints will ascend to inherit the mansions promised and prepared for them. Yes, happenings of eternal importance, at present almost inconceivable and incomprehensible, await the hour of Jesus’ coming—an event said Mr. Mitchell, “of greater importance to our mundane sphere, the future does not hold.”

THE GLORIOUS DAWN

The following summary contains the reasons given by Pastor Mitchell as to why Christ will come again:

“1. Christ’s second coming is the only thing possible that will end earth’s dark night of sin and misery and usher in the dawn of perfect day. This world of sin as we now know it is pictured as a dark night. Romans 13:12 declares: ‘The night is far spent, the day is at hand.’ The dark night of sin’s cruel reign will end only when ‘the Sun of Righteousness shall arise with healing in His wings,’ as foretold in Malachi 4:2, bringing the dawn of the perfect day as pictured in Proverbs 4:18.

“2. He comes to bring rewards to all. Revelation 22:11 states: ‘And, behold, I come quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give every man according as his work shall be. Matthew 16:27 teaches the same truth.

“3. The harvest of the earth is reaped at His coming. Matthew 13:29 describes the harvest as the end of the world. And Revelation 14:14, 15 describes the actual coming of Jesus to reap the harvest.

“4. The resurrection of the righteous dead awaits the return of Jesus. 1 Thessalonians 4:13-17, and 1 Corinthians 15:51-53, show that ‘the trumpet of the Lord shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible,’ when ‘The Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout ... the dead in Christ shall rise first.’

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“5. At that time the angels gather the saints. ‘And He shall send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.’ Matthew 24:31.

“6. He comes to execute the great separation of the sheep from the goats, as recorded in Matthew 25:31-43; or the tares from the wheat, as recorded in Matthew 13.

“7. The seventh reason necessitating the coming of Jesus is that the crowns of glory are not given till He comes. 1 Peter 5:4 states, ‘When the chief Shepherd shall appear, you shall receive a crown of glory, that fades not away.’ In 2 Timothy 4:8, we find Paul speaking of his crown of glory ‘laid up,’ which he expected to receive ‘at that day,’ the time when ‘all them also that love His appearing’ receive theirs.

“8. He comes to receive the prepared tenants for the mansions He has promised and has prepared for them. ‘And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself, that where I am, there you may be also.’ John 14:13.

119. His coming means an end to active sin, and all who cling to it. ‘And then shall that wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of His mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of His coming.’ 2 Thessalonians 2:8.

A NEW EARTH

“10. Christ’s second coming is the initial step to the setting up of His glorious kingdom in the earth after the saints spend their millennial reign, 1,000 years’ post translation course in heaven. 2 Peter describes the destruction of this earth, and the promise of its being made new. Revelation 21 gives the picture of the new earth, following the millennium of the previous chapter.”

In view of the many necessary features of the plan of salvation depending on the second coming of Christ, Mr. Mitchell emphasized the supreme necessity of this most important event. By virtue of reasoning, if He were not to come, sin’s dark reign would continue, and mankind would never receive its eternal rewards. Though the gospel seed had been sown, the harvest would never be reaped. The sleeping saints would not be resurrected and gathered by the angels, nor would the crowns be distributed, nor the saints gathered to the mansions promised by Christ in His comforting words of assurance spoken before departing from this world.

The words of the following poem concluded the address:-

“If Christ did not come, what then?
If He failed in His promise to men?
If the prophetic Word Dishonored its Lord,
And Christ did not come, what then?”

“The grave on the hillside would keep
Its treasures, while lone hearts would weep
Over the dark, silent tomb With its changeless gloom
Through ages eternal and deep.

“Then sin’s crimson tide would roll on
And deepen with each coming dawn,
Till madness and rage Filled history’s page,
And hope’s last prospective had gone.

“And the story of love that has cheered
The soul in the grief it has feared,
Would all prove a lie,
And faith’s dream must die
In view of the home it has reared.

“If Christ should not come? Oh, in vain
Men question the gospel refrain!
The promise divine
From your Lord and mine
Declares, ‘I will come again’”

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Robert Hare.

20. CHRIST'S RETURN-SECRET OR SPECTACULAR?

Biblical Version

The manner of Christ's return, the second of a series of lectures on the second coming of Christ, was delivered by Pastor Mitchell, in the Naval Hall on Sunday night. He said:

"SCRIPTURE not only teaches that Christ will return, but that He will return in a certain particular manner. In the days of Christ's first coming to earth, the Jewish leaders rejected Him because He did not come as they expected. They were looking for a Messiah who would deliver them from the Roman yoke, and set up and rule over an earthly kingdom in this sinful world as it was then. And because His birth, life, ministry, death, and resurrection followed the plan according to the prophecies and not according to the popular desires and opinions of His day, He was therefore rejected.

"Strangely enough," he continued, "while there exists to day world-wide unanimity of belief regarding the certainty and nearness of the second coming of Christ, yet there exists a diversity of opinion with regard to the manner of His coming. The Bible teaching is as plain as the noonday sun on the matter, but a multitude of people have drifted into error because, instead of accepting the plain message of Scripture, they accepted and adopted the practice of allegorizing the plain literal language of Scripture.

METHOD OF INTERPRETATION

"The only way," he continued, "to know that one has the Bible truth on any subject, is to take the message of literal language just as it read. If we adopt allegorizing methods of interpretation, the result will be as many shades of opinion as there are sets of brains desirous and capable of formulating doctrines according to their private allegorical, or spiritual interpretations. Literal language delivers its message without interpretation. When one allegorizes literal language he must of necessity obscure the original true message, thus neglecting to observe the teaching of 2 Peter 1:20 that 'no prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation.'

"Viewing the Scriptures through these allegorical lenses," said Pastor Mitchell, "many believed that Christ had already come, but invisibly and spiritually. They thereby missed the wonderful message of a glorious literal personal coming of Christ. There are others who just as unscripturally believe that Christ's second coming is still future, but that when He comes it will be known only to the elect, who will be taken away secretly. I have met many who have held this view, but have never yet met any, neither preacher or layman, who could produce sound Scriptural evidence to support the idea. Those who hold this view known as the 'secret rapture of the church,' are doomed to as great a disappointment as were the religious leaders in the days of John the Baptist, who were looking for the coming of a worldly conqueror."

MANNER OF HIS COMING

The following scriptures were read to show that Christ warned against counterfeit, or secret comings: "For many shall come in My name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many. Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, He is in the desert; go not forth; behold He is in the secret chambers, believe it not." Matthew 24:5, 26. Further verses in the same chapter were then read describing the actual manner of His coming. "For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shines even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be." "And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven, and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And He shall send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other." There is no secret gathering of the elect about that description, stated the speaker, and those were the words of Matthew 24:27, 30, 31, the words of Christ Himself.

Continuing, he said: "I have met sincere people who have cited the words of 1 Thessalonians 5:1, 2: 'But of the times and the seasons, brethren, you have no need that I write unto you. For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night.'

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“Now note carefully that this deals with the time of Christ’s coming. It is the ‘times and the seasons.’ The time comes as a thief. But the manner of His coming is described just a few verses previously, as I have often pointed out. 1 Thessalonians 4:16, 17: ‘For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the Archangel, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first:

“Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord.’ Now note that that describes the manner of His coming, whereas the illustration of the thief in the night concerns the time of His coming. The time is a secret, but the manner is anything but secret- accompanied with a ‘shout, with the voice of the Archangel, and with the trump of God.’

BEFORE THE MILLENNIAL REIGN

“Then reference is sometimes made to Matthew 24:37-42,” said Pastor Mitchell. “Here the Scriptures say, ‘One shall be taken, and the other left.’ It is wrongly assumed that the one taken is the righteous one taken to heaven, leaving the wicked untouched. But the simile used is a parallel with the day of Noah’s Flood. ‘The Flood came and took them all away.’ Whom? Why, it was the wicked that were taken.” So, it was said, the wicked would be taken by the elements of destruction, the seven last plagues, and the brightness of Christ’s coming as described in 2 Thessalonians 2: 8, before the righteous were translated. It was asserted that the same conclusion was taught by Christ’s answer as recorded in Luke 17:36, 37. Christ stated, “One shall be taken and the other left.” The disciples asked, “Where, Lord?”

Christ answered, “Where so ever the body is, thither will the eagles be gathered together.” “Those taken then,” said Pastor Mitchell, “are not taken to heaven, but are corpses, for eagles’ food.” From Job 39:27-30, it was declared that the eagles are “where the slain are.”

And Revelation 19:17, 18 was cited as describing the birds feeding on the wicked who were destroyed by the final destructions of the Lord. After the wicked were taken off by the elements of destruction, he said, the righteous who were left were translated as Christ returned to heaven for the millennial reign. After spending that 1,000 years in heaven, the saints, said the speaker, returned to the earth, which, after the resurrection and destruction of all the wicked, was described in the closing chapters of the New Testament as a new earth.

“EVERY EYE SHALL SEE HIM”

Acts 1, verses 9-11, was read to show that Christ would return as He went from the earth, visibly, to all. Revelation 1:7 stated that “every eye shall see Him.” Many scriptures were read that stated that Christ would “appear,” or that referred to His “appearing.”

Reference was made to Matthew 26:64, where Christ, in the grip of those who were condemning Him, calmly acknowledged the claim to be the Son of God; but Pastor Mitchell added: “Nevertheless I say unto you, henceforth you shall see the Son of man sitting at the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven.”

21. CHRIST’S RETURN-WHEN WILL HE COME?

“In the three subjects previously discussed, I have dealt with the certainty of Christ’s return; the manner of His coming; and the object of His return. Now we are to investigate the time of His coming,” were Pastor Mitchell’s introductory remarks to a lecture given in the Naval Hall on Sunday night.

“Christ Himself was questioned concerning the time of His coming,” he said, “and did not rebuke those who inquired, but gave a comprehensive reply. On the other hand, we find Matthew 16:3 recording Christ rebuking the religious leaders of His day with the words: ‘O you hypocrites, you can discern the face of the sky; but can you not discern the signs of the times?’ Now, friends, you will readily agree that if there are signs indicative of the time of the return of Jesus, we stand rebuked if we fail to become acquainted with them.”

Continuing, he said “Now come with me back over the centuries, to a scene on the Mount of Olives Jesus is talking with His disciples. They have just left the beautiful temple, the centre of splendor and pride of the Jewish nation. He has just been telling His disciples that it would be utterly destroyed, ‘not one stone left upon another.’ The disciples are amazed. Jesus has also spoken to them about His return to