

Bible Study Lectures

and day; and if suicides be included, deaths by violence occur at the rate of one to every half-hour the year round. In the past decade the United States has lost twice as many lives by murder as the number of her soldiers killed in the Great War. Even, year in America more people lose their lives at the hands of criminals than were killed in the bloodiest engagement of the American Civil War, the battle of Gettysburg.

“Viscount Brentford, for five years Home Secretary of England, voiced the query that is arising in millions of minds. ‘I pay my taxes,’ he said, ‘and I pay them in order, among other things, that I may be protected against criminals, that I may not be murdered, or have my house broken into, or even suffer under minor offences. But instead of having the security I pay for, I find that as a member of the public I am getting less security.’ Millions of law-abiding people, shelterless in the tempest of unchecked lawlessness now sweeping the earth, doubt if the foundations of the world’s morality have not entirely crumbled.

FORCES OF EVIL

“Here is a statement from the Washington, D.C., Post, November 24, 1930: ‘Ten thousand racketeers are compelling the people of this city (New York) to pay them staggering sums each year, while the police, who know all about their methods, do not lift a finger to stop their depredations.’ In a book written by Judge Kavanaugh, ‘The Criminal and His Allies,’ the author gives a solemn warning to the people of the United States. He gives statistics, stating ‘it is sinful to minimize the situation.’ He writes: ‘In spite of all these laws and the uncountable fortunes spent for the protection of our citizens, 121,000 unshielded inhabitants perished last year at the hands of assassins; 30,000 people were robbed last year; 32,000 others had their homes or other premises broken into.’

“He further writes: ‘At this moment the country is being attacked by an army of 350,000 who form an invisible foe. In other words, American soil is occupied by an invading hostile army more formidable in size and efficiency than any that before the World War ever invaded civilized country. It is twice the size of the armies that fought at Waterloo. Our Black Army is twice the size of the Union and Confederate armies that fought at Gettysburg. No story of atrocities told against the Germans by the newspapers of the Allied countries during the World War, no inflammatory tale of French cruelty published by German writers at that time, half equals in savagery the actual deeds this advancing army is sure to inflict on the patient, law-abiding American citizens during the coming twelve months.’

Mr. Mitchell said they heard of the kidnapping of the Lindbergh baby because of the fame of Lindbergh, but that was just a sample of what was going on all the time. He maintained that the evidence was conclusive that they had come to “the time of the end,” “the last days,” and that the only successful solution to the world’s problems was the promised return of Christ.

15. RELIGION IN THE MELTING POT

“In previous lectures I have dealt with the ominous message of Christ as outlined in Matthew 24; of the marvelous increase of knowledge peculiar to our day, and its significant message; of the unparalleled running to and fro of our time, and its lesson; and of the signs in the social world. Tonight we are to step into the religious realm, where we will find the changed conditions of our age, telling us again that we have come to ‘the last days.’”

Thus spoke Pastor Mitchell when introducing the subject, “Significant Signs in the Religious World,” in the Naval Hall on Wednesday night.

Before examining the Scriptural forecast of latter-day conditions, he said: “Suppose the Bible had foretold that in the last days the churches would be packed with devoted worshippers, and that the ministers would be found preaching the pure, unadulterated truth, and that spiritual conditions would get better and better. Why, the critics would say, ‘Either the forecast is wrong, or else we are a long way from the last days.’ But the prophecy did not forecast that way. It made no mistake. It foretold the exact religious condition that we find in the world today.

LACK OF FAITH

“The Bible foretold a general lack of faith, and the substitution of ‘fables’ for sound doctrine, as the prevailing condition of the ‘last days,’ whereas a minority only, the ‘remnant,’ would in the face of persecution contend for the ‘faith which was once delivered unto the saints, the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.’

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“A clear-cut picture is given in 2 Timothy 3:1-5. Verse 1 introduces us to the last days, with the words: ‘This know also, that in the last days . . .’ Then a catalogue of eighteen sins is given. Then in verse 5 we read: ‘Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof; from such turn away.’ Here, then, because of lack of faith, the multitude though having ‘a form of godliness,’ deny the power attributed to God, as described in the Bible. In Luke 18:18 we find the words: ‘Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall He find faith on the earth?’

“Now I know that, generally speaking, this prevailing condition of unbelief exists today in pulpit and pew; allowing, of course, for exceptions where the inroads of modernism and destructive ‘higher criticisms’ have not yet sapped the faith of preacher and members.

“The Christian church has been attacked right through the centuries of time. But formerly the attacks were from the outside. Paganism, apostasy, atheism, and frank unbelief in its various forms were kept outside the church membership. The church knew how to relate itself to its admitted enemies. It withstood their attacks, and marched in triumph over the graves of its critics. But today the most formidable forces, attacking the very foundations of Christianity, are found within the church itself. The Paines, the Voltaires, the Ingersolls of today are wearing the vestments of the churches. Saturated with modernistic unbelief and higher criticism they are found in the professor’s chair in many a theological college, destroying the fundamental faith of the men who pass on to the pulpit.

“POISONED WITH UNBELIEF”

“The minister in turn, leaving the religious seminary with his faith all shattered, ascends the pulpit only to administer the weekly doses of hollow modernism and doubt to the unsuspecting church members. Many of the members of the flock are poisoned with unbelief, and scattered just a little over ten years ago, I visited a certain church anniversary service in Wallsend, district of Newcastle.

It was a large church building, but the attendance had been shattered. Even for this special service the seating capacity for hundreds was occupied with less than sixty, including visitors. What robbed the church of its former congregation of believers?

“Here is the story as related to me by an old trustee of the church. The minister was a thorough-going modernist, apparently as sneering as Voltaire. Speaking from the pulpit he made such statements as, ‘Those who believe the story of Jonah and the whale are a single short,’ those who believe this or that have some other malady, until finally the climax came. There were still some loyal believers. The aged trustee, a stalwart lay-preacher himself, stood to his feet, and addressed the unbeliever at the consecrated desk with the words: ‘Now, then, that’s enough.’ Others said, ‘That’s right, Mr.-, that’s right; if you don’t come down from that pulpit we’ll turn the lights out on you.’ Thus before he had quite emptied the church he himself had to leave. He left the circuit, but not the ministry. His superiors simply transferred him; thus authorizing him to sap and undermine the faith of another congregation by his satanic unbelief, which, if preached a generation ago, would have meant immediate dismissal from the ministry, and marked him as an infidel unworthy of church membership. How sad the drift, the enemy inside the fort, firing the arrows of the black general!

NO BIBLICAL CONTRADICTIONS

“Another instance I recall is a reliable account from Dunedoo, N.S.W. A man who had read his Bible through many times and believed it, told me that, when speaking to some ministers of his town, they told him that the Bible contradicted itself. The man who had read his Bible through and through pulled out a roll of fifty pound notes, saying, ‘I’ll give you a pound note for every contradiction you find.’ The preachers did not find any contradictions. Then the believer said: ‘You call yourselves ministers of the gospel. You are not ministers of the gospel. You are hypocrites.’ Then he rolled up his notes, and retired.

“Years ago, when I was yet in my teens, I visited an ordained clergyman in Gilgandra, NSW, who declared he did not believe the Bible. An ordained clergyman, yes, with his collar reversed in regular fashion. ‘Of course,’ he said, ‘I believe some of it. But I couldn’t believe that the world was created in six days according to the Genesis account.’ ‘Some of it,’ I replied. ‘2 Timothy 3:16 says: “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God.” Does that only mean some of it?’ ‘Oh, no,’ he replied, ‘but we go by the prayer book mainly.’ ‘The prayer book,’ I said ‘is that inspired?’ ‘Oh, no, but it is about as old as the Bible,’ was his reply. And I think that somehow he didn’t care to make any more excuses for his inconsistencies, for he then suggested: ‘Oh, well, I suppose I’m only keeping you.’

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THE BREAD OF LIFE

“Personally I would rather break stones on the road with the intermittent workers than pose as a shepherd of the flock, if I did not believe in the Sacred Book, which to the flock is the bread of life. But, unfortunately, that is the position ever growing throughout the world today; the unbeliever occupies many a pulpit. How true the last-day picture ‘Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof’!

“Here are further last-day prophetic pictures. After speaking of ‘the last days’ in 2 Timothy 3, the fourth chapter says: ‘For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears. And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.’ And in 1 Timothy 4:1 we read: ‘Now the Spirit speaks expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils.’ And 2 Peter 3:3, 4 declares: ‘Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying, where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation.’

WHITE-ANTING THE CHURCH

“This is indeed the condition of the modernistic teaching that is white-anting the church today. They not only deny the truth of the second coming of Jesus, but they deny His deity, His creatorship, His virgin birth, His Sonship. His authority as a teacher sent from God, His working of miracles, His substitutionary death, His resurrection, His ascension, His divine intercession and priesthood. This and more is taken away by the modernistic preachers of our day. The divine inspiration of the Bible is doubted. In fact, nothing but a hollow belief is left. And yet those who deny the historical essentials of Christianity still desire to be known as ‘Christians’! Christianity today, like its divine Author, is being wounded in the house of its professed friends. The trumpet is surely given ‘an uncertain sound’; it is the sound of mere philosophic speculations.

“It is related as a fact’ (says ‘The Bible in the Critics’ Denial,’ page 86), ‘that a parishioner of a higher critic kept none of the Bible books criticized by his pastor, and cut from his Bible the portions criticized, till nothing was left but the empty covers, which he presented to the minister. Higher criticism, if followed, leaves the world without hope in the morass of sin.’ This new theology humanizes Inspiration and casts the Bible overboard. We would consider a captain who casts his compass overboard to steer by inward consciousness a fool or a madman. How much more the folly or madness of modernistic theology!

CRYING NEED OF THE HOUR

“Matthew 24:12, 13 states: ‘And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold. But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.’ We truly see this condition today. The crying need of the hour is to know the Christ of Scripture. But you will not find Him in the liberal critical teachings of modernism now permeating the churches. ‘During a recent year’ (says ‘Our Changing World,’ a book published in America in 1933), ‘the official reports of 60,000 American churches revealed not one soul brought to Christ.’ Modernism has no heart appeal. Genuine Christianity alone possesses the power to change hearts.

“Churches fed by modernist ministers have seen their mission budgets dwindle almost to vanishing-point and missionaries recalled. On the other hand, the Seventh-day Adventist Church, which claims that its ministry without exception is free from modernism and higher criticism believing the Bible fundamentally from Genesis to Revelation, is leading all churches in advancing foreign mission work. Last year this church added to its work sixty-five new languages. In other words, it commenced work in a new language on an average of every five and a half days of the year. They claim to be accomplishing the word of the prophetic ‘remnant’ church of Revelation 12:17 and Revelation 14:12, which though persecuted will carry ‘the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus’ to the entire earth; preparing hearts for the return of Christ, which will occur when the gospel warning is completed.”

16. SIGNS IN MILITARY WORLD; ARMAGEDDON

Who will fight? Who conquers? Who and what will be left after the war? Heaven’s timely advice.