

Bible Study Lectures

sixties. I have with me a photograph of one of these, now a curio in the Timaru Museum, New Zealand. At the time that I photographed it, I copied the accompanying words attached: 'This bicycle was made at Southampton, England, in 1868, and after being ridden here thousands of miles, was first used in Canterbury, New Zealand in 1876.'

How would you like to have to ride on of those iron-tired bicycles today? It is not so long since you were unable to purchase the pneumatic-tired bicycle.

YESTERDAY AND TODAY

"First the bullock dray and kindred methods of travel for nearly 6,000 years, then the locomotive, then the bicycle, then the automobile in 1890. I remember the time when as a boy I would run to the roadway to watch a motor buggy go by. But how primitive! But what rapid progress, reaching in our day a speed of 300 miles an hour!

"Then in the water—from the primitive beginnings of the early nineteenth century, what have we today? The luxurious town-ship, Queen Mary, 1,018 feet long, and a carrying capacity of 5,000 passengers. Three such vessels would be able to carry the entire population of Maryborough with perfect comfort.

"When in 1872 Jules Verne wrote his famous story, 'Around the World in Eighty days,' he was laughed at. Of course it was not possible at that time. But in the year 1903 the airplane was invented, and now the earth can be encircled in about seven days. C. W. A. Scott and T. Campbell; Black, in their De-Havilland Comet, flew from England to Melbourne in the Centenary Air Race of October, 1934, a distance of 11,323 miles, in 2 days 23 hours.

"Mr. Franklin H. Cooper, an editor of the Encyclopedia Britannica, speaking of the decade from 1911-1921, wrote: 'During these ten years we have witnessed an acceleration of events and changes, a kind of "speeding up" of history, that has been absolutely without parallel in the history of the world.' And the speeding-up process has been more pronounced since then. Our age of speed, of travel, of running to and fro, is indeed without parallel. We must learn its language. It is telling us that we are in the 'time of the end,' speeding toward the terminus of time."

14. SIGNIFICANT SIGNS IN SOCIAL WORLD

NOT as a pessimist, but for the purpose of reading the signals aright, of knowing where we are in the stream of time, and of learning a significant lesson, Pastor Mitchell claimed was his reason for an address given on Wednesday night on "Significant Signs in the Social World."

Several scriptures were read, outlining social conditions in "the last days," and citations from recent publications were read in support of the claim that conditions of our day correspond in a peculiar way to the descriptive social outline of the prophetic "last days."

The first scripture cited was 2 Timothy 3:1-4: "This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, truth-breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God." And verse 13 was read to support the statement that conditions would continue to become worse till the appearing of Christ: "But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived!"

ANCIENT AND MODERN CONDITIONS

Continuing, Pastor Mitchell said: "This catalogue of eighteen sins is an exact fit of world conditions today. I do not refer to our Own State or our Commonwealth merely, but to the world in general. In Great Britain there is a staff of police who are true to duty, and loyal, yet crime is increasing even there. In America, the conditions are beyond the control of the police. The armed underworld is so well organized that the police, knowing that appalling conditions exist, in many cases make no effort to resist the inroads of racketeering and crime of every description by organized and professional criminals."

Quoting Luke 17:26-30 and Matthew 24:37, 38, Pastor Mitchell said that the social conditions of the last days were to be an exact parallel with the iniquitous days of Noah's time, and of the city of Sodom. "Years ago," he said, "when I read those verses, I used to wonder how the world could ever become so wicked as in the days of Noah, when, apart from the few faithful servants of God, every imagination of the

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thoughts of men was 'only evil continually,' as is described in the sixth chapter of Genesis. But today I wonder no longer, for I am convinced that beneath the polished veneer of our twentieth century civilization, there is an ever-growing multitude who are fulfilling the prophecy: 'As it was in the days of Noah,' and 'Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed.'

Statements were read from "This Mighty Hour," recently published by an English author, A. S. Maxwell. This book gives information to the effect that the number of indictable crimes per annum in Britain has recently increased by 1,000 offences for every million of the population; also that Britain, in spite of hard times and unemployment, spends £260,000,000 annually on alcoholic liquors, as against £80,000,000 for bread, and £70,000,000 for milk. Mr. Mitchell contended that this illustrated the Scriptural truth of men being "lovers of their own selves," to the neglect of thousands of sorrow-smitten families.

AS A MAN SOWETH

"The antediluvian world," he said, "fell before the fatal triumvirate of drunkenness, sensuality, and pleasure. The eternal law of recompense still exists: 'As a man sows, so shall he also reap.' People complain of shortage of money, but somehow it is produced in abundance for pleasure. Here is a cutting from a New Zealand newspaper which proves the truth of the prophecy, 'lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God': 'The record crowd of 45,000 packed the Athletic Park in Wellington on Saturday, and witnessed the most brilliant spectacle of fast and furious football. . . . That was in the year 1930, the peak year of the depression in New Zealand. The same paper says further: 'The gate receipts at the Wellington Athletic Park on Saturday totaled over £7,000. And yet some people say there is no ready money in the country.'

DIVORCE AND SOCIAL DISEASE

"Genesis 6:2 records that in the days of Noah 'they took them wives of all which they chose.' And 'in the last days,' the condition 'without natural affection,' was foretold. In England and Wales divorce has grown from the yearly average of 563 during the first five years of the twentieth century, to an average of 3,358 divorces per annum during the years 1926 to 1930. In Russia, the marriage institution can be violated simply at the request of either party. And what of America? On an average, over 500 divorces are granted in that country every day of the year. Here is a statement from a book published in America, 'Civilization's Last Stand': 'In 1916 there were five counties in the United States in which the number of divorces exceeded the number of marriages. Last year (the book was published in 1929) there was a divorce in America every four minutes on the average. In the present decade, 1,149,696 divorces were granted; in the previous decade, 723,895. In other words, there has been an increase of 425,801 within the present decade.'

"The same book states: 'This alarming condition is not confined to America. Last year in France, 70,000 divorces were granted, and the records of nineteenth centuries reveal that divorces have doubled within the past decade. . . . There are deeper shadows. . . . Vice and resultant social diseases are making startling inroads on the modern world. The percentage of cases of venereal diseases is appalling. Social diseases are said to cost America three thousand million dollars a year, and to result in 10 per cent of the deaths.

There are 4,000,000 active cases in the United States. The talk of white slavery has died down, but the hellish traffic is still rampant. Twenty-five thousand girls are procured annually by beasts in league with devils, and are added to.'

CRIME ON THE INCREASE

"In the days of Noah the earth was 'filled with violence.' In the 'last days' they are described as being 'fierce.' Russia, Germany, Italy, Mexico, Spain, Ireland, almost all countries have had their outbreaks of violence. Even in New Zealand a few years ago there was a wave of reckless window smashing that spread from city to city. In America violence is permanent. According to the United States district attorney for Eastern New York, the amount which is taken from the annual business of New York City by the city's racketeers is from £45,000,000 to £88,000,000. And at the same time the Crime Commission gives the astounding information that business in the United States is forced to pay to racketeers a stupendous sum amounting annually to from £2,600,000,000 to £4,000,000,000.

"In the United States there are 12,000 murders a year. Chicago and New York record a murder a day, and sometimes several in one day. Taking that country as a whole, there is a murder every hour, night

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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.’