

28. Signs in the Religious World

“THE Protestant churches of America-and those of Europe as well-so highly favored in receiving the blessings of the Reformation failed to press forward in the path of reform. . . . The spirit inspired by the Reformation gradually died out, until there was almost as great need of reform in the Protestant churches as in the Roman Church in the time of Luther. There was the same worldliness and spiritual stupor, a similar reverence for the opinions of men, and substitution of human theories for the teachings of God’s word. . . . Men neglected to search the Scriptures, and thus they continued to accept false interpretations, and to cherish doctrines which had no foundation in the Bible.” - GC 297, 298.

“A backsliding church closed their eyes to the signs of the times. God did not forsake them, or suffer His faithfulness to fail; but they departed from Him, and separated themselves from His love. As they refused to comply with the conditions, His promises were not fulfilled to them. . . . God requires of His people works of faith and obedience corresponding to the blessings and privileges bestowed. Obedience requires a sacrifice and involves a cross; and this is why so many of the professed followers of Christ refused to receive the light from heaven, and, like the Jews of old, knew not the time of their visitation. Because of their pride and unbelief, the Lord passed them by, and revealed His truth to those who, like the shepherds of Bethlehem and the Eastern Magi, had given heed to all the light they had received.” - GC 316.

SELECTED REFERENCES

EW 273-276; 226-228; 6T 14-22; [6] Pages 130-144; 145-160. [7] Pages 247-286. [3] Pages 66-72.

Memorize: Hebrews 10:25.

A. DOCTRINES OF MEN.

1 Timothy 4:1, 2; 2 Timothy 4:3, 4; 3:5,9; 2 Peter 3:3,6; Luke 18:8, last part.

1 Modernism.

“No prophecies are being more signally fulfilled before our eyes today than those which predict a great apostasy within the Christian church. . . . Since the war especially Protestantism has been rent by the greatest controversy that Christendom has experienced since the Reformation of the sixteenth century. A great conflict has arisen within the church over such doctrines as the inspiration and reliability of the Bible, the deity and Savior hood of Jesus, the place of the supernatural in religion, the method of creation of man and the world, and the probable culmination of human history. . . .

“A most influential Modernist journal, the Christian Century, makes this challenging declaration: ‘Two worlds have crashed. . . . There is a clash here as profound and as grim as that between Christianity and Confucianism. Amiable words cannot hide the differences. . . . The God of the Fundamentalist is one God; the God of the Modernist is another. The Christ of the Fundamentalist is one Christ; the Christ of the Modernist is another. The Bible of Fundamentalism is one Bible; the Bible of Modernism is another.’”-A. L. Baker, in “The Hope of the World,” pages 247, 248.

2. Evolution.

“If there were no theory of evolution, there would be no Modernism. Evolution is the bone and marrow of the ‘liberal’ interpretation of Christianity. . . . The Modernists, in espousing evolution’s doctrine of a gradual development from primitive forms of life, have therefore been forced to deny the record of the beginning of all life, as given by Moses. The Bible’s teaching, from Genesis to Revelation, is that man and the world came full-orbed from the hand of the Creator, and that because of the sin of Adam and Eve there has been a gradual degeneracy rather than development, in both organic and inorganic life. Thus, you see, the Bible and the evolution theory are diametrically opposed.” - Id., pages 249-251.

3. No Bible.

“J. Frank Norris maintains that ‘the one issue between the Fundamentalists and the Modernists is the integrity of the Scripture. . . . Have we an infallible, supernaturally inspired, and inerrant Bible? On the answer to this question hangs the whole body of truth. If we have no infallible Bible, hen we have no infallible Christ. . . .’

“Charles Spurgeon . . . said: ‘The turning point of the battle between those who hold “the faith

once delivered to the saints” and their opponents, lies in the true and real inspiration of the Holy Scriptures If the foundations be removed, what can the righteous do?” And this is a foundation loss of the worst kind. . . .’

“The Modernists, however, to a man deny the inspiration and unique value of the Bible.” - Id., pages 253, 254.

4. No sin.

“W. R. Inge, dean of St. Paul’s, London, summarizes the popular conception of sin when he says: ‘What has decayed among us strangely and rapidly, is the sense of sin. . . . Is it not our real belief that sin is merely imperfection in process of being worked out-the ape and tiger in us not yet eliminated? Do we not sometimes delude ourselves with the notion that everything, ourselves included, is visibly and automatically progressing toward perfection?’ “ - Id., pages 258, 259.

“ ‘There is nothing imaginary in the statement that the creed power is now beginning to prohibit the Bible as really as Rome did, though in a subtler way.’ . . . The sin of the world’s impenitence lies at the door of the church.”--GC 389.

5. No atonement.

“The editor of the Biblical Review says that ‘the great central doctrine of the atonement is being quietly and unobtrusively edged to one side, and in some instances has been completely discarded.’ “-A. L. Baker, in “The Hope of the World,” Page 261.

6. No judgment.

“One Modernist minister has put the case in these words: “There is no future judgment day, and no judge external to ourselves.”

Sir Oliver Lodge, eminent scientist and writer, has a matter of fact the higher man of today is not about his sins at all, still less about their punishment. This doctrine taught by Modernism, of no day of assize, before God for the deeds of life, is immoral. It tends to make men and women lax in their lives. Because they feel that if they never are to be called to account for what they do, they can do just as they please so long as they preserve a degree of decency before their fellows for the sake of their reputation.”-Id., page 263.

7. No Savior.

“President Hall, of Clarke University, has written: I believe in the historical Jesus, but I have tried to show how even the church can get on, if it should ever have to do so, without Him, and that this might possibly ultimately make for greater spirituality.’ . . . Harnack said, Jesus is not indispensable to the gospel.’ “-Id., page 266.

8. No God.

“George M. Royce, of Harvard, wrote shortly before his recent death, that ‘God is the spirit animating nature, the universal force which takes the myriad forms, heat, light, gravitation, electricity, and the like.’ “-Id., page 271.

9. No second advent-scoffers unwittingly fulfilling prophecy.

“James H. Snowden, a prominent Modernist, and writer against the doctrine of the second coming, has said: ‘. . . The scientific study of the Scriptures [higher criticism], the recent study of Jewish apocalyptic eschatology of which premillennarianism is a relic, and our modern science, which has shown that this world is vastly older than six thousand years, and is destined to last indefinitely longer than one thousand years more. These, I take it, are the facts that have relegated this survival of bygone ways of thinking to the scrap heap of discarded theories among scholars.’ “-Id., page 275.

“J. H. Snowden reports that in twenty-eight leading theological seminaries of eight denominations, with two hundred and thirty-six professors, there are only seven professors who believe in the doctrine of the second coming of Jesus Christ.” -Id., pages 283, 284.

Read here: 2 Peter 3:3, 4; Romans 1:18-25; 2 Thessalonians 2:9-11.

B. MASTERFUL DELUSIONS.

Matthew 24:4,5,11,12,23,24; Revelation 12:12; 13:13,14; 16:13, 14; 2 Corinthians 11:13-15.

1. False shepherds.

“A few years ago an evangelist of world-wide reputation, speaking before five thousand people in Brooklyn, New York, said: ‘I would not be surprised any morning, to take up the daily paper, and among the cables, read that Jesus had come to London, San Francisco, or some other large city.’ Others teach that the coming of Christ will be a secret affair.”-J. L. Shuler, in “The Coming Man of Destiny,” page 47.

Pastor Russell says, “His presence will be a secret for a time, known only to those watching.” “His arrival must therefore be in a quiet manner, unobserved, and entirely unknown to the world. “-”Studies in the Scriptures,” Vol. II, pages 153,143.

2. Spiritualism-doctrines of devils.

“Spiritualism, which numbers its converts by hundreds of thousands, yea, by millions, which has made its way into scientific circles, which has invaded churches, and has found favor in legislative bodies, and even in the courts of kings. This mammoth deception is but a revival, in a new disguise, of the witchcraft condemned and prohibited of old.” - GC 556.

3. A trinity of evil.

“Satan works in a way never before known. The principles which made Rome the most oppressive government, are revived and strengthened. The miracle-working power of Spiritualism adds strength to the oppression. Paganism (the dragon), the Papacy (the beast), and fallen Protestantism (the false prophet) join hands. Urged on by the unclean spirits, deadly decrees are issued by this threefold union, and Satan himself appears in person. The angels loose the winds of strife; and marshaled by the great commander of the legions of darkness, the nations gather for the great battle of Armageddon.”-S. N. Haskell, in “Story of the Seer of Patmos,” page 283.

4. Worldliness.

“Many expect to be carried to heaven on flowery beds of ease. The sin loving are unwilling to give up their pleasures and gratifications. Members of churches now openly play cards and attend races and dances, the movies, and worse. But You can’t walk with God and dance with the devil; You can’t serve God on the Sabbath and page the devil the rest of the week. The Christian soldier has something more to do than to go out on dress parade once a week. Christianity is not a creed, but a life. With all the earnestness of my soul, I assert that the shallow formalism of nominal Christianity is offensive to High Heaven. Verily regeneration and reformation are the need of the hour. Without it, our civilization, our ethics, our creed, our organizations, our institutions, are valueless - yea, but an added curse. The call of the hour is for a return to the Bible, to the standards of the apostles, and to the practices of the early church. The time has come to complete the arrested Reformation of the sixteenth century. The hour is ripe for a repudiation of all errors brought in during the early centuries, and made dominant during the Dark Ages.”- L. E. Froom, in “Civilization’s Last Stand,” page 86.

C. THE GOSPEL TO ALL THE WORLD.

Revelation 14:6-12; Matthew 24:14; 2 Timothy 4:14.

“With the sixth verse of chapter fourteen [of Revelation] begins a view of the last work of the gospel in the earth. . . . The everlasting gospel, the power of God unto salvation, has been the point of controversy since the days of Eden. . . . This [first angel’s] message went to the world; there was not a missionary station in the earth where they did not hear the message, ‘The hour of His judgment is come.’ . . . This is the first angel’s message. . . . and it will continue to sound till time shall close. . . . While the first angel continues to sound, a second angel follows, saying, ‘Babylon is fallen, is fallen.’ . . . The preaching of the everlasting gospel was a test of life. . . . All are given an opportunity to stand with God or with the enemy. . . . The second angel followed the first, and the third angel followed them. Every nation under heaven will hear the warning against worshiping the beast. Each individual will be given an opportunity to honor the Creator by obeying His law and keeping holy the Sabbath of the Lord. All will receive sufficient light to decide intelligently.”-S. N. Haskell, in “Story of the Seer of Patmos,” pages 252-261.

“Starting in 1874, with a single missionary to publish the gospel in all the world, the Seventh-day Adventists have continually enlarged their program, increased the number of their workers abroad, scattered everywhere their publications, proclaimed their Savior and their goal. We believe that it is the only Protestant denomination that has kept steadily before its members, as the goal of their efforts and their hopes, the evangelization of the world in this generation. . . . the telling to every soul on earth that Jesus

Christ died for him; that

Jesus Christ will forgive his sins; that Jesus Christ will enable him by divine grace to do the will of God; and that Jesus Christ will soon make His second advent in all His glory to this world.” - Signs of the Times, Aug. 27, 1929, page 8.

“Today [October, 1944; centennial of the beginning of this movement], this denomination has 9,212 churches with 641,559 adherents, living in 413 countries and islands, and using 822 languages in the proclamation of the gospel. They have 83 publishing houses, providing literature in 202 languages, with annual sales of approximately five and a half million dollars. They operate 82 sanitariums and hospitals, employing 293 physicians and 6,685 nurses and other persons. In the educational field they conduct seventeen senior colleges and 250 secondary schools, besides 2,932 primary schools, employing altogether 5,926 teachers, and enrolling 124,352 pupils.”- Id., Oct. 24, 1944, page 3.

KEY TEXTS

Timothy 3:14 2

2 Corinthians 11:13-15

Matthew 24:14

Timothy 3:1-4

Revelation 12:12

Hebrews 10.25

THOUGHT QUESTIONS

1. How have the popular churches come to the strange pass of discrediting the fundamentals upon which they were founded?
2. What message have they now to give the world, with its dire need, as an excuse for existence?
3. Can a gospel of social, industrial, and political reform meet the actual need of the world of today? If not, why not?
4. What effect has the Modernist preacher on foreign missions?
5. How only can Seventh-day Adventists as individuals hope to retain the purity of faith and zeal for the cause of God which characterized their pioneers?

TEST QUESTIONS

Answer With Ample Bible Proof

What false doctrines are specifically named as being apparent in the last days?

What fundamental reasons are stated as underlying this popular religion or lack of religion?

What most powerful delusions are still in store for those without a personal faith in the Rock of Ages?

What specifications of a true message bearing church also constitute a sign of the times?

What exhortations are addressed to the faithful believers in view of these last-day conditions?