

26. Signs Among the People

“PRACTICALLY all of the fifteen per cent of the prophecies which remain unfulfilled relate to the second appearance of Christ. The evangelist D. L. Moody said the Second Coming is mentioned in the Bible about twenty-five hundred times. Out of the twenty-seven books in the New Testament, twenty three contain from one verse to whole chapters on the Second Advent. The epistle to the Galatians, that to Philemon, and the second and third epistles of John-comprising all together only nine chapters-are the only New Testament books which contain no reference to Christ’s coming. Certainly, then, if frequency of mention is any criterion, the Second Coming of Jesus is a cardinal doctrine of the Bible.”-A. L. Baker, in “The Hope of the World,” page 33.

Note to teacher and student: Owing to the rapid changes in statistics covering the signs which the references in this lesson predict, we refer attention to sources in the latest literature available and to reports current at the time of this study. It is suggested that material be brought to class from the best news reports and reliable statistical agencies. Comparative figures might be cited showing current trends which have definite significance as fulfillment. Specific examples are always to be found which constitute indications of conditions clearly foretold in Holy Writ.

SELECTED REFERENCES

9T 89-92; 11-18; PP 101-104; [3] Pages 51-56. [5] Pages 46-60; 61. [7] Pages 173-189; 191-223.

Memorize: Luke 21:28.

A THE STATE OF BUSINESS AND FINANCE.

1. Labor.

1 Timothy 6:10; James 5.1.8; Isaiah 8.21, 22; Luke 21:25, 26.

Strikes are of frequent occurrence, showing unrest and dissatisfaction with wages and working conditions. Labor unions, organized for the laborers’ supposed and real interests, are gaining power in politics. They are reaching out into the affairs of the church and religion. The labor requirements and rest period of the fourth commandment may become irreconcilable with labor-sponsored legislation. Under totalitarian government labor laws are of great consequence.

2. Capital.

“Everywhere in the world, extravagance and poverty can be seen side by side. Every city has its Fifth Avenue and its East Side, its mansions and its hovels, its wanton waste and its pinching want. The shadow of every rich man falls athwart the path of a hundred poor men. The grasping of life’s prizes by a few, while the masses of men and women must work and weep without satisfaction and without adequate reward-such is the history of mankind.” - Id., page 42.

“Economic issues are the chief and bitterest of our time.” -L H. Robinson (historian), in “The Mind in the Making,” page 176.

3. Industrialism.

“The extended use of machinery means in practice that every worker is himself turned into a cog in a machine.... All joy in labor, all the pleasure of creation, all art and ingenuity, are killed by such excessive mechanization.” - Dean Long, in “Outspoken Essays,” 2d series, pages 228, 229.

4. Love of money.

“The love of money is a part of the warp and woof of human nature, and human nature itself will have to be transformed before peace will reign supreme in the world of capital and labor. More wages will not satisfy the laborer, nor will increased dividends appease the capitalist. It was the wise man who said, ‘He that loves silver shall not be satisfied with silver; nor he that loves abundance with increase.’ . . . A man can accumulate so much of this world’s goods that he no longer owns them: they own him, dominate him, drive him, make him hard in his human contacts, and a despiser of the kingdom of heaven, which shall be inherited only by the poor in spirit.”-A. L. Baker, in “The Hope of the World,” pages 46,47.

B. INCREASED CRIME.

2 Timothy 3:13; Matthew 24:12; Genesis 6:11, 13; Luke 17:26.

An editor of a great daily writes: “There seems to be an irrepressible mania for shedding blood and experimenting with vice and the illicit. . . . The deeds of violence are greater in number and more horrible in detail than ever before. . . . We are in the midst of a storm and whirlwind of insurrection.” - *Id.*, page 177.

C. “LOVERS OF PLEASURES.”

2 Timothy 3:14; Isaiah 22:12, 14; Matthew 24:37, 39; Luke 17:28, 30.

1. Pleasures of sin.

No generation has been more obsessed with the love of pleasure and the search for new and novel thrills to the five senses than the present. Motion-picture theaters, commercialized sports, horse races and dog races, gambling by various means, boxing matches, mammoth circuses, are attended by thousands of devotees. These not only consume time and almost unbelievably large sums of money but take a sinister toll of nervous and mental energy. The harvest of such sowing is a matter of deep concern to thinking persons. The price of pleasures of this type is too great for long endurance. The human race is in moral, mental, and physical decay. Hope is to be found only in the speedy return of Jesus Christ.

“It is indisputable that in these respects we are following in the footsteps of Rome. The editor of the *Biblical Review* declares: ‘The study of things since the war, reveals a scene growing steadily darker. Love of pleasure has passed all decent bounds, and unless checked will soon produce a period of widespread moral degeneracy.’ . . . But today the vices that destroyed Rome are world wide, so that when the amusement craving, vice, and wanton luxury do their work on our generation, there will be no new blood to rise up and carry on.” - *Id.*, page 201.

2. The youth and home.

“Business, society, pleasure seeking, marital infelicities, and above all, a general letting go of religion, are the causes for the deplorable state in which thousands upon thousands of homes find themselves. Consequently youth falls into temptations and irregularities tenfold more easily now than heretofore. The criminal statistics tell the story.” - *Id.*, page 179.

“Those who seek to lessen the claims of God’s holy law are striking directly at the foundation of the government of families and nations. . . . And this is why there are so many godless families; this is why depravity is so deep and widespread.” - PP 143.

“The underlying cause of crime and general disregard of the law is the absence of religious training of the youth. And, conversely, the most potent force for the cure of crime is a return to the teachings of the Ten Commandments.” - Editorial in a Chicago paper; quoted in “The Hope of the World,” page 182.

D. INCREASE OF ACCIDENTS AND DISEASE.

Romans 8:22, 23; Luke 21:26; Ezekiel 16:49, 50.

“The average man or woman has more illness in store, and less years of health, than ever before in the history of the world.” - *Id.*, page 68.

Albert Edward Wiggam, scientist and sociologist, writes:

“The first warning which biology gives to statesmanship is that the advanced races of mankind are going backward. That the civilized races of the world are, biologically, plunging downward; that civilization, as you have so far administered it, is self destructive; that civilization always destroys the man that builds it. That your vast efforts to improve man’s lot instead of improving man are hastening the hour of his destruction; that the brain of man is not growing; that man as a breed of organic beings is not advancing. That microbial diseases are apparently decreasing, while at the same time man’s incapacity to resist them is probably increasing. That the great physiological diseases of man’s body-heart disease, Bright’s disease, diabetes, cancer, degenerative diseases of the arteries, liver, and central organs-are increasing. That the functional neuroses, the diseases that affect man’s mind and behavior-neurasthenia, hysteria, epilepsy, insanity, and the multiform minor mental and nervous derangements of the function-are probably all increasing. That weaklings, paupers, hoboos, and imbeciles are increasing; that leadership and genius-great men and first-class workmen-are decreasing.” - “The New Decalogue of Science,” pages 25, 26.

“In the second coming of Christ, the faithful of this world will find the redemption of their sin-filled and pain-racked bodies. . . . Let the sick man on his bed, let the mourner beside his loved one, look up and lift up his head, for the redemption of the body draws nigh!”-A. L. Baker, in “The Hope of the World,” page 85.

KEY TEXTS

James 5:1-5

2 Timothy 3:15

Luke 17:26

2 Timothy 3:13

Luke 21:26

Romans 8: 22, 23

THOUGHT QUESTIONS

1. In what proportions does the Bible foretell the greatest event?
2. Has the worldly person yet discovered a single truly satisfactory form of pleasure? If not, why not?
3. Why has science failed to cope fully with crime and disease?
4. Why do the youth of today so often fall into heavy crimes?
5. In view of the evident facts of this lesson, what should the individual with noble ideals take to heart?

TEST QUESTIONS

Answer With Ample Bible Proof

1. Do present conditions among the people give indication of an approaching millennium of peace and prosperity ‘on earth’?
2. What description of the thoughts and affections of men in the last days is given?
3. What remedy does the Bible give for this deplorable situation?
4. Draw up a summary of the most evident signs of this lesson.
5. Toward what time is all creation looking forward?