

Light on Scriptural Prophecy

The Fig Tree and Israel

In last week's issue of Farm and Dairy you said that the fig tree of Matt. 24: 32 represented the people of Israel or the Jews, and claimed that because the Jews are once more showing signs of national life and national unity, that the possession of Jerusalem (after the present war), this is one of the strongest reasons for believing that the second coming of Christ may be near. What reason have you for believing or saying that the fig tree represents the Jews?

In Isaiah 6, verses 1 to 7, the prophet Isaiah likened the children of Israel to a vineyard which had been given every advantage and care, but which, instead of bringing forth good fruit brought forth wild grapes. Thereby he foretold that the Jews, in spite of the great revelations and blessings given unto them by God, would fall as a nation to live righteously, and therefore judgment was to come upon them. In Matt. 21: 23 to 46, and in Luke 20: 9 to 13, Christ, by means of a parable, reminded the Jews, all of whom were familiar with the prophecies of Isaiah, of that prophecy. By the son, Christ meant Himself. In Matthew's account (verse 46) we see that the chief priests and the Pharisees knew that Christ meant that they represented the wicked servants. The parable of the barren fig tree (Luke 13: 6 to 9) was given to the Jews with the object of conveying the same warning. Note how in the seventh verse Christ mentions that for three years (the extent of His ministry up to that time) the owner of the vineyard had been looking for fruit. Christ offered Himself to the Jews as their promised Messiah and King. In their blindness and wickedness they rejected Him. Finally, after His claims to be the Messiah had been rejected by the chief priests and scribes (the spiritual leaders of the Jews) in the temple (Matt. 21: 12 to 17) He cursed the fig tree (Matt. 21: 18-20). This was symbolical of the casting off of the Jews temporarily, as foretold in Isaiah 6: 4 to 7. Christ then began to foretell the destruction of Jerusalem, the features which would characterize the end of the age, and to speak of His second coming. In Matt. 24: 3, we read how His disciples approached and asked Him what were to be the signs of these great events. As one of the signs which should precede His second advent He mentions the fig tree (verses 21 and 23). By this His disciples knew that He referred to the people of Israel, who were to be dispersed and later regathered to Jerusalem (note Isaiah 11: 10 to 13, and many other Old Testament prophecies). The cursing of the fig tree by Christ always troubled me until I understood its meaning, as it seemed as though Christ had acted in anger. All Christ's acts we find, when we study them carefully, had wonderful meanings of this character.

Will the World Be Christianized?

THE man who expost the second coming of Christ seem to think that the world, morally at least, is not growing better, and that when Christ comes again He will come in judgment. Last summer I heard a minister give a splendid sermon on the parable of the barren fig tree. He said that the barren fig tree represented Christendom, and that the parable meant that in the time the whole world would be Christianized. Does not this contradict the other view?

The interpretation of the parable of the barren fig tree which you mention is absolutely contradicted by our Lord's own interpretation of the parable of the tares and the wheat (Matt. 13: 24 to 30 and 27 to 43) as well as by the parable of the net (Matt. 13: 47 to 50). Both these parables show clearly that at the end of the age there will be a mixed condition of

good and evil on the earth, that the good will be preserved and the evil destroyed. We should remember that Christ was speaking to the Jews, who were commanded never to use heaven in any of their feasts. Their laws required that they might even be put to death for using heaven under certain circumstances. Thus, when Christ spoke of heaven to them they immediately thought of it as something evil, not good. This they were justified in doing, because Christ Himself always spoke of heaven in an evil sense. (Note Matt. 10: 6 to 1 and Mark 8: 16, also 1 Cor. 6: 1 and 2.) Note also that the meal represented the flour or wheat, which always stands in Scriptures for what is good. (Matt. 13: 23 to 30.) Christ, therefore, would not speak of mixing something that was good with something that was evil in order to make what was evil good. Dr. Scofield, D.D., in his references to the Bible, summarizes this point as follows: "The parable constitutes a warning that the true doctrine, given for the nourishment of the children of the kingdom (Matt. 4: 4; 1 Tim. 4: 6; 1 Peter 2: 2) would be mingled with corrupt and corrupting false doctrine, and that officially, by the apostate church itself (1 Tim. 4: 13; 2 Tim. 2: 17-18; 4: 3 to 4; 2 Peter 2: 1 to 3). It is generally realized that many false doctrines are being taught to-day."

The Two Views Explained.

WHEREAS can I secure a good book setting forth the different interpretations of the Scriptures, as given by the post-millennialists and the pre-millennialists as to whether the world is to get better before Christ comes or after? One of the best is "The Second Coming of Christ, Pre-Millennial and Imminent," by Dr. C. T. Haldimand, pastor for the past 26 years of the First Baptist Church, New York. It may be obtained through the Book Department of Farm and Dairy for \$1.00 with ten cents added for postage. This book gives a striking summarization of Scripture passages, and has had a wide sale.

Yours of recent date reminding me that my subscription to Farm and Dairy has expired, received. I certainly do not intend to discontinue taking your paper. I like Farm and Dairy too well for that. Being a dairy farmer and a Holstein breeder, your paper appeals to me very strongly.—John C. Chisholm, Lower South River, Antigonish Co., N.S.

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