

[R3104 : page 333]

THEY ALSO HAVE ERRED THROUGH WINE.

– ISAIAH 28:1-7 – NOVEMBER 23. –

THIS is set before us as a temperance lesson. We will not say that it was not built upon certain conditions obtaining in Isaiah's time – that intoxication was a crying evil amongst the Israelites; but we do say that in our understanding this is a prophecy belonging specially to our day – whatever may have been the force, meaning or application in the day in which it was written. The whole tenor of this chapter as well as the following one, the twenty-ninth, in our judgment, proves this. Ephraim, used by the prophet as a name for the ten tribes of Israel in contradistinction to the two tribes called Judah, would seem to represent in our day nominal Christendom, and the drunkards of Ephraim would represent the intoxication of Christendom – not literal alcoholic intoxication, but the intoxication of error, of false doctrine, of human schemes and plans, the spirit of man and of the adversary in contradistinction to the spirit, the teaching of the Lord. This intoxication is referred to later on by the same prophet, saying, "They are drunken, but not with wine; they stagger but not with strong drink. For the Lord hath poured out upon you the spirit of deep sleep [spiritual stupor], and hath closed your eyes." (Isa. 29:9-12.) It is again referred to as the wine of Babylon with which all people have been intoxicated. – Rev. 17:2; 18:3.

The fall of nominal spiritual Israel, the fall of Babylon in the great time of trouble now approaching, is described in verses 2,3. All who do not get rid of this intoxication of error, even tho members of the spiritual house, will have their portion with the world and with hypocrites in this coming storm, which will wreck completely our present civilization, social, political, financial and ecclesiastical. The glory [R3104 : page 334] of Babylon at the present time is as that of a beautiful flower, but it shall quickly fade, its riches and its pride will cause it to be the more quickly devoured – as are the first fruits of the

summer – by the lawless ones, the anarchists, who will be bred of discontent, and who will be developed rapidly as a result of the iniquity that will prevail because of this drunkenness of Babylon with false doctrines and false expectation and blind stupor to the great changes of dispensation now taking place.

The explanation of a blindness, stupor and drunkenness so general as to affect not only the priests and prophets but all the people of Christendom, is referred to in verse 7. Babylon has had indeed the golden cup of the Lord's Word in her hands and has affected to give from it to the people the spirit of the Lord, but instead she has filled the cup and presents as the teaching of God's Word intoxicating errors which have misled the so-called Christian world. Thus the Adversary has used the nominal Church of God as his tool to deceive all that dwell upon the face of the whole earth – to misrepresent the divine character and plan. (Rev. 14:8.) Thank God for the promise that the time is coming when that old serpent, the devil, Satan, shall be bound a thousand years that he shall deceive the nations no more until the thousand years are finished! – Rev. 20:3.

In the midst of such a general declaration of the drunkenness of mystic Babylon and the storm of divine indignation about to overthrow churchianity, it is comforting to find that the Lord breaks in upon the narrative, suggesting that in the midst of such general intoxication of error there will be a residue of God's people whom he can approve and bless. Verses 5,6, call the little flock to our attention – the Lord's jewels. In the midst of all this confusion incidental to the fall of Babylon, the Lord himself will crown his faithful with glory and beauty. Even in the present life his truth in their hearts shall cause their faces to shine, and their table shall be spread even in the midst of those who are their enemies, who will be compelled to admit that these have meat to eat that the world knoweth not of and that they have a filling of the Lord's spirit that gives them joy and peace even in the midst of trials and difficulties. It will be more than this; for very shortly it will mean that they shall receive at the Lord's hands the

crown of life – be changed and receive the fulness of divine favor and blessing – glory, honor, immortality and joint-heirship with their Redeemer in his Kingdom.

These enlightened by the Lord and filled with his spirit will have sounder judgment even in the present life and be able to do valiantly in disputing and disproving the spirit of error and its proud and boastful claims; and by and by, when changed and made partakers of the Kingdom glories, the Apostle assures us that these shall be amongst the judges of the world, saying, "Know ye not that the saints shall judge the world?" They will then with their dear Redeemer occupy the place of judgment during the Judgment Day, the Millennial Age, and overcome all the forces of error and darkness and evil, so that eventually the Lord shall bruise Satan under their feet, wholly overthrow his kingdom and influence, and establish in its stead the Kingdom of God under the whole heavens, destroying all who would corrupt the earth, bringing it, in harmony with the Lord's prayer, to that condition in which God's will shall be done on earth even as it is done in heaven.

