

THE WINE OF FALSE DOCTRINE

– ISAIAH 28:7-13. – MARCH 24. –

Golden Text: – "Wine and new wine take away the heart."
– Hosea 4:11.

THE Scriptures refer to two kinds of drunkenness – with both the results are disastrous. It would be quite unjust to charge all the troubles of the world against intoxicating liquors, and yet when one considers how far reaching are the baneful effects of alcohol it certainly does appear to be one of the worst foes of the human family – even though it be, as one of the latest scientific discoveries shows, the integral part of the heating or stimulating influence of the blood in all animals. Evidently nature has provided in her own laboratories for the proper amount, and all additions thereto are dangerous. We like to hear young people, and especially young men, able to say that they [R3962 : page 90] have never tasted a drop of intoxicating beverages. Such a testimony does not, of course, prove them to be saints, but it does demonstrate that in this one particular they have good judgment. He that never tastes can never be injured by this adversary. Before leaving this phase of the subject we quote words credited to the great agnostic, Robert Ingersoll, as follows: –

"I believe that alcohol to a certain degree demoralizes those who make it, those who sell it and those who drink it. I believe from the time it issues from the coiled and poisonous worm of the distillery until it empties into the hell of crime, death and dishonor, it demoralizes everybody that touches it. I do not believe that anybody can contemplate the subject without becoming prejudiced against this liquid crime. All you have to do is to think of the wrecks upon either bank of this stream of death – of the suicides, of the insanity, of the poverty, of the ignorance, of the distress, of the little children tugging at the faded dresses

of weeping and despairing wives, asking for bread, of the men of genius it has wrecked, of the millions who have struggled with the imaginary serpents produced by this devilish thing. And when you think of the jails, of the almshouses, of the prisons and of the scaffolds upon either bank – I do not wonder that every thoughtful man is prejudiced against the awful stuff called alcohol."

OUR LESSON GENERALLY MISUNDERSTOOD

In our judgment those who provided the present lesson failed to grasp its real import as part of Isaiah's prophecy. We do not dispute that there may have been drunkenness of a most literal kind in Palestine at the time the Prophet Isaiah uttered these words. But we certainly do doubt that the drunkenness was so general as to justify this language except in some hypothetical and prophetic sense. Undoubtedly those of Isaiah's day were ready to accuse him of gross exaggeration in his statements – for instance, that all tables were full of vomit and filthiness, so that there was no place clean. It is only when we apply this chapter as a prophecy relating to the harvest time of the Jewish age, and again to the parallel time of the harvest of this Gospel age – only then do we begin to see that the Prophet's words were strictly true to the conditions they detailed.

The Apostle Paul, in 1 Cor. 14:21, quoted the eleventh verse of our lesson and applied it distinctly to the "gift of tongues," which, in apostolic times, the Lord used in connection with the establishment of Spiritual Israel – to demonstrate divine power to natural Israel and to instruct those who would hear respecting the glorious message of salvation through Jesus; and again, in Romans 9:33 and 10:11, the Apostle quotes from this chapter (Isa. 28:16), and continuing his argument he quotes Isa. 29:10 in Romans 11:8. So surely as the Apostle was right in this application of this lesson, we are correct in claiming that it was

not originally merely a temperance lesson to certain profligates of Isaiah's day.

At the time of our Lord's first advent Israel knew not the time of its visitation, and because outwardly moral, respectable, godly, they drew nigh to the Lord with their mouths while their hearts were far from him, having the form of godliness but denying its real power. (2 Tim. 3:5.) We have no reason to think that alcoholic intoxication was a special feature of that time amongst that people, but we do know that they were drunk and blind and stumbled and were out of the way through the strong drink of false doctrine. Our Lord declared that they made clean the outside of the cup and platter, but that inwardly it was full of all manner of corruption: he cautioned the disciples to beware of the leaven, the corruption, of the Pharisees and Sadducees – that their teachings were not supported by their lives. He declared that they made void the law of God through their traditions – they were drunken with the traditions of the ancients – so stupidly drunken that they knew not the time of their visitation, and that when the Redeemer came unto his own his own received him not, but crucified him.

The Apostle Paul, in Rom. 9:10, shows that in their blindness the Lord allowed the Jews to stumble, and in Rom. 11 he assures us that this stumbling would continue until the full election of Spiritual Israel, after which the Lord would bless them and pour out his Spirit upon them and upon all flesh through the elect of this Gospel age. It was because of this intoxicated condition of their hearts that the Lord's messages were line upon line, precept upon precept, so that it was necessary to speak to them in other tongues in the early Church, to gather out the less intoxicated, those who had any ear to hear the message of divine mercy. As the last verse of our lesson declares, and as the Apostle Paul corroborates, all the messages of the Lord failed because of this drunken condition – "And they did fall backward and were

broken, snared and taken." Thank God that the time of their deliverance and the opening of their eyes is near at hand!

APPLICATION TO SPIRITUAL ISRAEL

We have heretofore seen that the Jewish dispensation was a type or parallel of the Gospel dispensation, only on a lower plane. It is proper, therefore, that we should expect in the present harvest time similar conditions of drunkenness, similar stumblings in nominal Spiritual Israel. Is it not written that the Lord would prove to be a stone of stumbling or a rock of offence to both the houses of Israel? Do we not see how the first house stumbled because of intoxication with the wine of false doctrine? and do we not hear the Lord's messages in the symbolical book of Revelation telling us of the intoxicated condition of nominal spiritual Israel? – all nations made drunk by the wine of Babylon's fornication, corruption, misapplications of the blessings and mercies and privileges granted in this time. It is in full harmony with this that the Apostle urges that the Lord's people have the right kind of wine, the right kind of joy, the right kind of stimulation, saying, "Be not drunken with wine, wherein is excess, but be ye filled with the Spirit" – the Spirit of the Lord, the spirit of the Truth, the spirit of righteousness, the spirit of a sound mind – quite contrary to the spirit of error, the spirit of deference to the traditions of men, the spirit of Antichrist, the spirit of superstition.

The application of the lesson to the Jewish harvest is eminently proper. It is quite evident that the harvest of this Gospel age, being in many respects much more important, the application should be made here with still greater force, and we have so done – as will be seen by noting the references to the various volumes of the MILLENNIAL DAWN series and ZION'S WATCH TOWER in the margins of our special Bible. **[R3963 : page 91]**

"THEY ERR IN VISION, THEY STUMBLE IN JUDGMENT"

The prophecy that great Babylon would make all nations drunken with her false teachings (Rev. 18:3) has been most literally fulfilled. The professed followers of the Lord of every nation and kindred seem to be under the delusions of these false doctrines; hence they err in vision, they cannot see the riches of divine grace: the nightmare of eternal torment at the hands of demons is vividly before their minds as the truth, so that they really blaspheme the gracious Creator unintentionally, misrepresenting his glorious arrangements for the redemption and recovery of the children of men. Many of them so stumble in judgment that they preach, as did Jonathan Edwards, that the eternal torment of the great majority of the race was foreknown and premeditated by the Almighty before Adam was created, and that such treatment of his creatures must be recognized as just – yea, more, as loving – so that the Lord's true people, with all this in mind, should praise God the louder and should consider that his justice was thus made manifest. Alas! what erring in vision, what stumbling in judgment, what inculcation in the spirit of Antichrist and the "doctrines of devils." – 1 Tim. 4:1.

"TABLES FULL OF VOMIT"

Today as never before this Scripture is fulfilled – "All tables are full of vomit" – not literal tables, but symbolical tables of the various denominations. Each denomination has gathered together at the table of the Lord, to be fed of him upon his words of truth and grace, "Wonderful words of life." But today, having gotten rid of some of the ignorance and superstition of the "dark ages," the Lord's people of various denominations, as they gather at their respective tables, feel sickness, nausea, as they contemplate the spiritual food provided for them and which they have pledged themselves to eat. The various dishes are garnished with choice

rhetoric, and the table is grand with flowers of lovingkindness, mercy and benevolence. Few eat at all, but all gather regularly as a matter of duty. The odor of the dishes is sufficient, and even this is occasionally so strong as to produce nausea and vomiting – the rejection by the more enlightened of the doctrinal monstrosities and horrible misrepresentations of divine justice and love, inconsistent and unpalatable to the last degree.

Truthfully the Prophet says, "All tables are full of vomit." Of which creed is it not true? at which denominational table do we find intelligent Christians gathering and really feasting upon that which they declare to be the divine revelation of the divine purposes toward the children of men? Surely it is true that each denomination is ashamed of its own table. Surely it is true that no one will be found in any denomination willing to defend in public the sectarian creed which he has professed. Is it any wonder that the whole head is sick and the whole heart is faint amongst the Lord's nominal people? The wonder rather is that these sick and disgusted ones do not rise and repudiate the tables at which they can no longer eat and be nourished and comforted, and that they seek for the true table of the Lord, of which the Scriptures tell us, "Thou hast furnished me a table in the presence of mine enemies." Respecting which the Scriptures again assure us that our Lord at his second advent will gird himself as the servant of his true people and come forth and serve them, presenting to them things new and old from the storehouse of grace and Truth. O, surely all who are of the right character of heart, hungering and thirsting for righteousness, will find the true table of the Lord and will be satisfied, filled thereby.

THE TABLE OF THE LORD VERSUS THE TABLE OF DEVILS

The Lord does not hold himself responsible for the false doctrines that were so generally received during the "dark ages"

and which the Apostle describes as "doctrines of devils." All the while he has had the true table for those who were of true heart, for those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, but he has permitted also that the great Adversary prepare a table for those who are not of the spirit of the truth. It is the Apostle who asks, "What communion hath light with darkness? and what accord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an unbeliever?" (2 Cor. 6:14-16.) It is the same Apostle who again points out the distinction, separateness of those who are truly the Lord's people, saying, "Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of devils; ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table and of the table of devils." – 1 Cor. 10:21.

True, the various tables of the various sects of Christendom were started as tables of the Lord, and adorned to some extent with food from his storehouse, the Word. But the great Adversary placed upon these tables various errors, delusions, doctrines of devils, which have blemished them as a whole; wherefore it is appropriate now to apply to them the words of the Scriptures, "Come out from amongst them and be ye separate, touch not the unclean thing." "Babylon is fallen, is fallen [rejected of the Lord], Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins and receive not of her plagues." (2 Cor. 6:17; Rev. 18:4.) Surely she shall fall utterly, as a great millstone cast into the sea of anarchy. – Rev. 18:21.

"WHOM SHALL HE TEACH KNOWLEDGE"

Ah, here we have it! The knowledge of the truth contrasted with the confusion and drunkenness of the error in the present condition, with the Lord's people gathered around various sectarian tables, failing to recognize that there is but one table of the Lord as there is but one Lord, one faith, one baptism, and one God and Father of all. Under these conditions the Lord through the Prophet inquires, "Who can receive instruction?" Who would

be ready for the Truth? Evidently only a few is the implication – peculiar people, more zealous for the favor of the Lord than for name and fame amongst men or earthly honors and emoluments. These and these alone are in the attitude of heart to be taught of the Lord, these he will teach knowledge. And he is teaching them; the saints are being gathered from one end of heaven to the other, away from the various tables of men to the spiritual food and refreshment which the Lord himself is providing at this time according to his promise. Amongst these never was there such rejoicing, such feasting, such pleasure – at last they have found the meat in due season for the household, the Lord's provision, and they find it strengthening and joy-inspiring.

As a further part of the question, as an explanation of the kind of teaching, of the needs of the hour, the Apostle says, "Whom shall he make to understand doctrine" – the message of the Lord? The majority of those who have **[R3963 : page 92]** already vomited, rejected, the creeds of men feel so great a disgust for everything in the way of doctrine that they can barely endure to hear that word. They are inclined to say, "We have had enough of doctrine for the rest of our lives, let us hear no more of that, let us think nothing in particular, decide nothing in particular, know nothing in particular, merely hope something, hope that in some way unknown to everybody God will eventually do for the human family that which it really needs." No wonder, then, the Prophet inquires, "Whom shall he teach doctrine?" with the implication that few will be ready or willing to receive doctrine at this time when the creeds of Christendom are being rejected by all thinking people – at heart, if not outwardly.

But our dear friends go to an extreme. It is not the doctrine of God and his Book that is wrong; it is not the divine plan that is in error; it is the teaching of the Adversary, which he combined with the Word of God, that caused the drunkenness and

subsequently the sickness, the nausea. What need there is to realize that the defilement came from the Adversary, from human traditions, and that then while rejecting human traditions we must learn to go to the Word of God, the real storehouse of food and Truth, the real table of the Lord, with greater zeal, hungering and thirsting for the Truth that we may be filled. We have need to look to the great Master himself, who promised to be present in this time and to send at the hands of his servants the things new and old to the tables of his people. We need to scrutinize all that we receive, lest we ever be taken again by the delusions and hallucinations of the Adversary, the doctrines of devils.

"WEANED FROM THE MILK"

The Prophet describes the class that will be ready to receive the Truth – that they must pass the stage of infancy and be ready for the stronger meat of the divine Word. In this connection we notice that while theologians have prepared the malodorous doctrines of devils as the standards, they have for some time been withholding these from the people and endeavoring to have them, as "babes," use merely the "milk of the Word." This certainly is better than partaking of the adulterated, sickening, doctrinal presentations of the various sects; but, as the Apostle here intimates, it will not be sufficient in this time that one should be a babe in Christ and use merely the milk of the Word. In order to be an overcomer he must grow in grace and knowledge, and possess the fruits and graces of the Lord's Spirit, and this cannot be obtained merely through the milk of the Word. As the Apostle declares, we have need of strong meat, that as men we may be strong in the Lord and in the power of his might. This strong meat that he refers to is the strong doctrines, the strong teachings, the deep things of the divine Word. Only those who are weaned from the milk, drawn from the breasts, who have ceased to be babes and made some development – only these will be prepared for the

instructions that the Lord now has to give, precept upon precept, line upon line, here a little and there a little.

As in the harvest of the Jewish age the Lord took the unlearned and gave them foreign tongues and inspirational powers for the dissemination of the Truth then due, and did not use the tongues of Scribes and Pharisees and Sadducees, [R3964 : page 92] so in the present harvest time he is also using other tongues than those which had previously been used. The table of the Lord will not be established within the lines of sectarianism, but outside of them, and those who listen merely for the voices of the doctors of divinity will miss the instruction which the Lord will give in this time, and which will be given by other tongues outside of Babylon entirely. Thus it is written, "In her [Babylon] shall be heard no more the voice of the Bridegroom and the Bride." The Bridegroom's voice is outside, and all who have the Spirit of the Lord and who are therefore true virgins, eligible to be his Bride, will hearken to his voice and speedily come out of Babylon, in harmony with this declaration. But this will be but a little flock as compared with the mighty hosts of nominal Babylon; for the latter the same blinding, rejection, stumbling is as certain as it was to natural Israel in its harvest time. "He shall be for a stone of stumbling and rock of offence to both the houses of Israel." – Isaiah 8:14.
