

The King's Highway

An Advocate of Scriptural Holiness

“And an highway shall be there and a way, and it shall be called The way of holiness.”

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DILUTED RELIGION

By H. S. Dow

“Thy wine is mixed with water.” Isa. 1:22. These words are a part of God’s complaint against His ancient people Israel. He takes the attitude of a broken-hearted parent, and calls on heaven and earth to listen to His story! He says: “I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me.” He also assumes the profession of a doctor or nurse, makes a diagnosis of their trouble and finds that the condition is very serious indeed. He says that the whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint with no soundness in it, from head to foot. They were wrong in both heart and head, the true condition of all backsliders, whether churches or individuals. Hence the exhortation to backsliders, “Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and ‘return unto the Lord.’”

He also mentions several symptoms as proofs of their backsliding. See verses 22 and 23: “How is the faithful city become a harlot! Untrue to their vows of former years, and now worshipping their own little gods or idols. ‘Thy princes (leaders) are companions of thieves.’ Compromisers, mingling with unsaved people, ‘everyone loveth gifts, and followeth after reward.’ They had lost their interest in the poor and needy. ‘They judge not the fatherless, neither doth the cause of the widow come before them.’ They were catering to the money people who were able to bestow gifts.

Furthermore, He says, “thy silver is become dross.” In those days silver seemed to be one of the most valuable of metals, the chief medium of exchange by which a man’s wealth was computed. Of course the prophet is using figurative language here, and means that they had forsaken the God-appointed standard of righteous living and, while they still had the dross of a religious profession, they were evidently living, dressing and adorning themselves much like people of the world. (See chapter 3:18 where He condemns their manner of dress which was very similar to the customs of today). Yet they had their forms of worship with their sacrifices and offerings and observing days and times and seasons, all of which God said, His soul hated, and He was weary of them. Isaiah 1:12-93.

And, as the text reads, “Their wine was mixed with water.” What religion they had left was greatly diluted, very weak and of a very mild type. Wine is used in many places in the Word of God as a symbol of the joy of the Holy Spirit, which cheers and accelerates

our spiritual life. The Psalmist speaks of God giving wine to make glad the heart of man and oil to make his face shine. Isaiah also invites the thirsty to come and buy wine and milk, etc. There seems to be something about the soul filled with the Holy Spirit that is suggestive of a person under the influence of wine. On the day of Pentecost when the disciples were all filled with the Holy Ghost, the mockers said, “These men are full of new wine.” Paul also wrote to the Ephesians, “Be not drunk with wine wherein is excess, but be filled with the Spirit.” Again, in the Old Testament, “They of Ephraim shall be as a mighty man and their hearts shall rejoice as through wine; yea, their children shall be glad and rejoice in the Lord.” Zec. 10:7.

The prophet’s charge of their having their wine mixed with water seems to indicate that there was a lack of joy in their devotions or worship. There may be two reasons why men would dilute wine. One would be to make it weaker, so children and babes could drink it. Paul complained of the Hebrew church because they could not take strong meat of the Word and he had to give them milk because they were babes. So perhaps in Isaiah’s day the people could not digest the pure truth of the Spirit, hence it had to be diluted. Or they might dilute wine with water to make it go farther so it would serve a larger number of people. You know we ought to reach the crowds some way, and water is more plentiful and much cheaper than wine. But, people don’t get very joyful or very hilarious drinking water. And since the Bible has so much to say about rejoicing in the Lord, and rejoicing at all times, and the joy of the Lord being our strength, it seems that God really wants His people to manifest a spirit of joy and happiness and freedom in the Holy Spirit, like men under the influence of wine. I don’t know how the one hundred and twenty disciples were acting on the day of Pentecost when they were charged with being drunk, but I feel sure that there is no danger of us being charged with being drunk when we meet together to worship, and the reason I think is very clear: We are altogether too quiet. Oh, we can do a lot of singing, which is good as far as it goes, and we can do that without much help or inspiration from the Holy Spirit. But the writer of the Acts says the disciples all spake with other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance, and that was because they were filled with the Holy Ghost, Luke says. And methinks it will take just that today to have a real live, joyful, free testimony meeting. But we cannot have water mixed with our wine.

Water stands for the common, ordinary things of life. Our care for legitimate work,

etc. Our Lord warned us to beware lest our hearts be overcharged with these things. The trouble with our churches is not that there are so many bad people in them, but because there are so many just ordinary professors, moral people, with very little spiritual life, not much uplift or inspiration in their prayer, when they testify, if they do speak at all. They don’t contribute anything of inspiration to a meeting. Too much water in the wine. Everybody brings water, and seem to expect to get the wine from someone else. Not many bring wine. Hence there is not much inspiration. Let us pray.

TEMERED TRUTHS

F. A. Dunlop

“For Me and thee.” Jesus, with His disciples, had entered the town of Capernaum. Here, Peter was accosted by those receiving tribute. “Doth not your Master pay tribute,” said they. Peter’s answer was “Yes.” But when Peter entered the house, Jesus called his attention to the absurdity of it all. “Of whom do the kings of the earth take custom or tribute? Of their own children or strangers?” Peter replied, “of strangers.” Jesus saith unto him, “then are the children free.” I think Jesus must have meant, strange that the King of kings should be asked to pay tribute in His own world. Absurd indeed. “Nevertheless,” said Jesus, “lest we should offend them . . . go thou and give unto them for Me and thee.” Here, Jesus lays down a rule for “free children”—children of the King. Better subscribe to certain rulings which seem absurd, than to give room for offence by refusing to subscribe.

I suppose we have not lived in a day when there were so many man-made laws as at present. Laws that apply to every phase of our living. Our buying, our selling; our building, and our tearing down; our rentals, our earnings, and our expenditures. We are so hedged about by laws and restrictions that it is difficult for one to ascertain when he is in or when he is out. With this multiplicity of old and new rulings comes the temptation to question their right of claim.

I think we need to remind ourselves that we are passing through abnormal times—times which call for radical change in legislation as well as in other matters. Considering this, the parties responsible for our present setup are not to be criticized too harshly. The difficulty they have faced undoubtedly is this: To make a ruling, broad enough in its application to cover the whole, that does not seem absurd

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