

The Christian.

ST. JOHN. N. B. APRIL, 1892

EDITORIAL.

A PECULIAR PEOPLE.

Titus ii. 14.

The grace of God that "bringeth salvation unto all men," the apostle says, "teaches us that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously and godly, looking for the blessed hope and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ."

The apostle seldom speaks of Christ without referring to His death. If he made excursions elsewhere, they were but excursions—his home and glorying were at the cross. There he thought of sin and wept, and there he rejoiced in the great sacrifice which puts away sin.

"He gave Himself for us that He might redeem us from all iniquity and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." This is an unspeakable gift. Though proclaimed by many thousands on earth, and sung by the redeemed family forever in heaven, the description will never reach the reality of the gift.

We will here consider the *object* of that gift—why He gave Himself for us. His wisdom is equal to His love, and His object must in some way be commensurate with the grandeur of His gift. It was that He might redeem us from all iniquity, take off our chains and set us free from all iniquity. In our guilt and ruin He deemed our redemption worth the sacrifice, and to gain it exchanged the glories of heaven for the life of an outcast and the death of a malefactor. He bought us that we might be His own, and purifies us to Himself. He claims redeemed humanity, and they are nearer to Him than the angels. They are a peculiar people, known and read of all men. People are to learn who and what Jesus is by looking at His peculiar people, for they bear His image. If He saves a young man He calls him "My brother." If He saves a young woman He calls her "My sister." If an aged woman, He says of her, "She is My mother." All who do His Father's will belong to the heavenly family, and resemble Him who is the head. They do good to all men like He did. When reviled, they revile not again, but strive to render good for evil—taking after their Owner and Redeemer.

But this peculiar people are surrounded with snares. Their enemy goes round seeking whom he may devour. He makes evil appear good, and sometimes draws them from Christ ere they are aware. They must resist the Devil, and instead of entering into heaven, without any particular effort or self-denial, must fight the good fight of faith and lay hold on eternal life. Christ is offering them the sweetest fruits of His spirit, and the enemy is seeking to ensnare them with the works of the flesh, which are these: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strifes, sedition, heresies, envyings, murder, drunkenness, revellings and such like, which positively exclude persons from heaven.

Some of these works of the flesh seem abominable, others more respectable and attractive. Satan will try young Christians at every point; if he fail in one he will, if possible, seduce by another. That we may shun him and "feast at the banquet of mercy," the Lord tells us what are the fruits of the Spirit, viz: love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance; against such there is no law. (Gal. iv. 19-23).

Dancing is held in repute by worldlings. Young Christians are often surrounded by dancing parties and earnestly urged to take part in them, nay,

they are almost forced to do so. If they are not determined in the Lord's strength to resist this temptation they will be overcome. Yielding once they can more easily do so the second time, and so on till they care but little for the church, its worship, discipline and admonition, and finally forsake it altogether.

We would affectionately ask our Christian readers to consider this matter, and consider it prayerfully. Look at the abominable works of the flesh, read them over. Would you like to be overcome by any of them? Your cunning enemy watches to ensnare you. We speak of dancing parties, not because they are the worst and most abominable works of the flesh, but because they lead to those, though they belong to "revellings and such like," and are the most respectable, they are among the most ensnaring of these works, and are therefore the more dangerous in leading away from the Saviour. You never think that the joy you feel in such parties is the fruit of the Spirit. You can never ask the Lord's blessing to be with you when at such places. This course is certainly not in the narrow path which leads to life, but on the "broad road" on which many travel, from the revelling savage to the cultivated worldling.

No doubt many young persons who love the Saviour and would be sorry to grieve Him are thoughtlessly drawn into this snare, and that, too, by those who would report the same as a reproach on them and their religion and their church. We are glad to know that many young Christians understand these things, and have resolved in the Lord's strength never to be caught in this snare; and we pray that they may faithfully adhere to this determination, and always in this and all other matters be found for and not against the Lord Jesus. We should shun the very appearance of these evils when we remember how "the flesh warreth against the Spirit," what evil its works do to the church and how they stand as braces against the salvation of those who hear the Gospel. No wonder that the Lord declares by His servant, that they that do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. (Gal. v. 21).

Christ's peculiar people walk in the Spirit and do not fulfil the lusts of the flesh. Their pleasures are pure and lasting. They are not their own, but bought with a price and aim to glorify God in their bodies and spirits, which are God's. They are zealous of good works. Even the world knows the difference between good works and bad, and God's people are known and marked by all men. All can see the difference between feeding the hungry, clothing the naked and neglecting them. They can see the difference between training families who will bless society and training families who will be a pest and a terror. They can see the difference between a praying man and a swearing and drinking man, and the difference between those who assist each of these in his course. They can see the difference between those who encourage and assist men to turn from sin to God and those who do not, between those who spread the Gospel and those who do not.

Good works are beautiful in themselves and they are peculiar to Christ's own people. They are zealous of good works, do not need to be coaxed to do them, but are not satisfied without doing them. They lead in doing good, set the example, and say by their actions, even more than by words, "Come with us and we will do you good."

Sin may open as bright as the morning and end as dark as the night.

In St. Paul's, London, there is a whispering gallery, a voice uttered most feebly at one side of the gallery is heard distinctly at the opposite side, a great distance off. So, every word of earnest prayer goes all round the earth, and makes heaven a whispering gallery.—TALMAGE.

Original Contributions.

"THE FIRST MAN IS OF THE EARTH, EARTHY."

I COR XV: 47.

(Continued from last issue)

It may still be said, therefore, that the life possessed by our first parents was an immortal life, and that the taste of the forbidden fruit, or the disobedience in partaking of it, cast the seeds of mortality into their nature, and so immortality in them was destroyed. That when God created them and placed them in the Garden of Eden, He gave them a law, and that law was prohibition. It said, "thou shalt not eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil." He therefore intended they should not eat of it. But it may be forgotten that God gave a law at Sinai, beginning, "thou shalt have no other gods before Me." Was it in God's mind that that law would certainly prevent all idolatry? Did He know (suppose) that that law would prevent all dishonoring father and mother? Prevent all killing? Prevent adultery, stealing, bearing false witness, or coveting? If He knows all things, He knew it would not entirely prevent, but would to an extent have a restraining influence, and would put the Israelites past the possibility of covering their sins by the plea of ignorance. So God in the Garden of Eden said, "thou shalt not eat of it." But He also said, "in the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." Was that a threat only, or was it also a prophecy? Or, more properly speaking, a promise? Let us not forget the significant expression of Paul in summing up the inheritance of those who have been brought into the possession of "eternal life" by the Lord Jesus Christ. "All things are yours, whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours, and you are Christ's and Christ is God's." Now then, God has given us Christ—"the seed of the woman." Christ has brought life and immortality to light. He has broadened, or enlarged, Eden. He has the glorious prospect of leading many sons unto glory. This was the joy which was set before Him, but in bringing them unto glory He brings them through death. Therefore, Paul says: "Death is yours," and in saying this he places it among the other gifts of God. (I. Cor. iii. 22).

O, what a wonderful change? In the little Eden here, one child-like, innocent pair. In the Eden over there, an innumerable company which no man can number, out of every nation and kindred and people and tongue, redeemed by blood; not simply good because they know no evil; but, positively good, cleansed from evil and having the satisfaction of knowing that, although "made subject to vanity" for a time, they have forever been "delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God" (R. V.)

Surely then, the design was not that man should live an unended life in "Elen's bowers" on earth, but rather that he return to the earth from which he was taken, and that his whole posterity should return with him. Hence we are told: "In Adam ALL DIE; but we are also told; "In Christ we shall all be made alive."

This corresponds with the thoughts with which this article is begun: "The first man is of the earth, earthy," and also, "the second man is the Lord from heaven."

Let us now return to a thought already lightly touched: that man, left to himself, would grow, mature, wither, and droop and die.

But, says one: Was not death caused by eating the forbidden fruit? No! The eating the forbidden fruit was the occasion, not the cause of death. Man, if not supernaturally supported would have died from natural causes. His eating the forbidden fruit simply caused him to be cut off from that which would perpetuate his life.