

The Christian.

ST. JOHN, N. B. OCTOBER, 1890.

EDITORIAL.

THE GIVER AND THE GIFT.

Who gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity and purify unto himself a peculiar people zealous of good works (Tit. ii. 14.)

In the context the apostle speaks of the grace of which brings salvation to all men. He says that grace has appeared, teaching us to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live righteously and soberly and Godly, and to look for that blessed hope and the glorious appearance of the great God and our Lord Jesus Christ. It seemed impossible for him to think of Christ without stopping to gaze on the cross and linger on what he did, and he vents the deep emotions of his heart in these words, "Who gave himself for us," etc., etc.

The proper receiving of a precious gift awakens feeling both for the gift and the giver. We value the gift and esteem the giver. In this case the gift and the giver are one. "He gave himself for us," and the very name of Jesus will stir the redeemed soul forever.

The gift of a friend in need is the measure of his sympathy for us. If by fire or flood we lose our all, and two men equally able befriend us — one gives us a dollar and the other gives ten — we can easily decide which of the two feels most for us. Our dearest friend will do the most for us. Christ loved us and gave himself for us. This gift eclipses every other. The highest and rarest gift of man is that a man should lay down his life for his friend; but here is the Son of God freely dying for his enemies, showing a love that has no parallel. But the gift of himself is as just as it is benevolent.

No created being can justly give his life for another, for the simple reason that it is not our own to give. He has received his life from God, and holds it in trust till God calls for it. A man for a trifling offence challenges another to a duel. The other declines, saying: I can never take an important step without the approval of my reason and conscience. Were I to fall I can see no justice in giving away the life that God has given me for other purposes. My country needs my life, my family needs it, and I am not at liberty to give it away. Should you fall in the fight your life would be gone, and nothing would be left but your carcass, which could be of no value to me. You would lose all, and no one would gain anything by it, and so I decline. Here was true courage — a man daring to reason and to do right regardless of popular opinion. No created being has a right to give up his life only at the call of the Creator. Were an angel to offer his life for man's salvation it would be rejected both on the ground of injustice and inefficaciousness.

Christ was not created. His life was his own, and he had power to lay it down and power to take it up again. No man could take from him what was his own and undivided. He gave himself; hence the justice and dignity of the gift. The life of Jesus, his actions, his words and his tears always testified that he came not to be ministered unto but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many. His face was always toward Calvary, and what he constantly declared in his life he confirmed on the cross.

But the gift of himself was not rash or hastily made. It had the eternal wisdom of God in it, because the ord to be accomplished, he regarded as commensurate with the sacrifice. It was for the joy set before him that Jesus endured the cross; and the Holy Spirit through the prophet declares that "he shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied." (Isa. liii. 12.)

That he might redeem us from all iniquity and purify unto himself a peculiar people zealous of good works is the declared purpose of Jesus' gift; a purpose so great as to cause and to justify even such a gift. Our sins have been a monstrous wrong and injustice to God and the universe and ourselves. To redeem us from all this iniquity he gave himself, and also to purify unto himself a peculiar people zealous of good works. Though he made and owns the principalities and powers in the heavenly places he sought to redeem unto himself a peculiar people, and all "the eyes of whose understanding will be so enlightened as to know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints" (Ep. I. 18) will forever admire both the gift and the purpose of the giver. The riches of his inheritance in the saints has a glory as peculiar as are the saints themselves from all the other intelligence in Christ's boundless dominion.

Although eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither hath entered into the heart of man the things which God hath prepared for them that love him, (Cor. II. 9), yet God hath revealed to the apostles by his spirit of the peculiarities of Christ's own people, some of which we may now consider:

1st. They are peculiar in their relationship, being the bride of Christ. The Lamb's wife. This is described in Revelation and other parts of the New Testament, and largely treated in the fifth chapter of Ephesians. No other intelligences claim such relationship to Christ as his bride.

2nd. They are peculiar in their nature, being the children of God and the brethren of Christ. He was in the form of God, and thought it not robbery to be equal with God, . . . but took upon him the form of a servant and was made in the likeness of men, etc., (Phil. II. 6, 7.) The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, etc., (John I. 14.) When his own (nation) received him not he gave power to every one who received him to become the sons of God. John says: "Now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be," etc., etc. Jesus, then, has a human and a divine nature, and is the same yesterday, to-day and forever. So, with his own people, whom he purifies unto himself. They and they alone will have the human and divine nature sweetly blended forever.

3rd. They are peculiar in the fact that they are redeemed and forgiven much, and will have much. They will sing salvation to our God and to the Lamb (Rev. vii.), and praise him who has washed them from their sins by his own blood. None will be able to sing redemption's song but the peculiar people whom Jesus redeems and purifies unto himself.

4th. This people will have a peculiar home. Having a divine nature, being his bride and like Christ, and seeing him as he is, they will be with him to behold his glory (John xvii. 24). Although his Father's house has many mansions he has gone to prepare a place for his own people, and will come again and receive them unto himself, that where he is there they may be also (xiv. 2, 3.)

In the 7th of Revelation this people are graphically described, their countless number, their peculiar place (before the throne), their song, their harps and white robes, whence they came and the Lamb feeding them and leading them to living fountains of water, and God having wiped away all tears from their eyes.

This peculiar people are characterized on earth by doing good, "by good works." Jesus their God and living head "went about doing good," and they love to follow him. They not only do good when it happens in their way, but they find out ways and means of doing good. They are "zealous of good works." They have been with Jesus and learned of him, and are most interested in what most interested him in seeking and saving that

which was lost. This will be a blessed death. "Yea saith the Spirit that they may rest from their labors and their works do follow them." (Rev. xxiv. 13.)

Original Contributions.

GOSPEL POWER.

According to divine revelation we tell the story everywhere that the gospel is the power to save those that believe. This can be easily vindicated, because the Holy Spirit has made the statement. Nevertheless there are many who question this statement, and ask for an explanation as to how the gospel saves. It is an easy matter to impress this fact upon the mind of the inquirer, if the mind can be induced to forsake all prejudice ideas. The salvation of the soul depends on knowing what to do and doing it. The old theological idea of waiting for the windows of heaven to be opened, and the power to come with irresistible force and wake the dead in trespasses and in sin has become so prevalent that many, in spite of gospel light, hold to this phantom idea with great tenacity. We who claim that the gospel is the power to save, freely submit all questions concerning this claim to severe and critical investigation. We are not afraid to submit our claim to the most severe scriptural investigation. False conclusions are just plausible to him who reads wrong as true ones are to him who reads right. Nowhere upon the pages of the New Testament are we commanded to believe in the spirit as an abstract power to save the soul. But the command is prevalent to believe in the gospel as the power to save. How then can we avoid censure should we advocate that the spirit alone is the power? Should this statement undergo a scriptural test? The work of man's redemption is a completed work. Also to complete this great work, there were co-operation of the three powers of the Godhead. These three official agencies are the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The work of these divine agencies were combined to complete the scheme of redemption. The Father designs the work. The Son executes the Father's orders. The Holy Spirit consummates and seals the design. The Father sent the Son according to his design. The Son came to earth clothed in a garb of our weak and sinful nature, and for sin condemned sin in the flesh by dying in the presence of witnesses whom he had chosen. This was to satisfy and meet the demands of the Father's design. After death he went into the grave. Three days later the Spirit, according to the Father's will, brings him back to life, and into his hands is committed all authority of the Godhead in heaven and in earth. The Son now becomes the designer and the promoter of the remaining work of man's redemption. The Son being invested with all authority, he remains long enough among his chosen work — man — to prove his identity with the same Jesus that bled and died upon the cross, and to leave with them the commission they were to execute. He ascends to his throne in the heavens to reign until he shall have put down all rule and power. Seated at the right hand of God in power he sends his advocate, or the Holy Spirit, to those chosen workmen according to promise. This power or advocate was to be in them (John xv. 17.) He was to speak through them. He was to take charge of their hearts, minds and tongues. He was to guide them into all truth. We stop now for a moment to ask, What did the advocate from the heavens do, and where did he go, and to whom did he come, and who did he convert, and how did he convert? Did he come with power and fill the place where these chosen men were gathered. Was not his miraculous descent confined to the