

denounced as a *dangerous evil*. "At the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder." Prov. xxiii. 32. "Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging." Prov. xx. 1. It is associated with revolting crimes. Noah's shameful exposure of his person, Lot's incests with his daughters, Nabal's unnatural selfishness, Ahasuerus' drinking feast and the divorcement of Queen Vashti that grew out of it, Belshazzar's drunken revellings in his palace which brought the handwriting upon the wall and the doom of Babylon, are so many beacon lights warning us against the rock alcohol.

REDEEMED SINNERS.

"Who gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity and purify unto himself a peculiar people." What then was his object? To redeem us, to buy us back from bondage, to save us by the payment of a ransom price, not only from the punishment of sin, but from its power, from its love, from its pollution, from its foul and hideous embrace, no less than from its sword and from its chains. It was to set us free from sin itself that Christ redeemed us; not from sin, but from all sin; not that we should still remain, or afterwards fall back under the dominion of the very tyrant from whose power he redeemed us; not that we should merely exchange one hard master for another, or for many;—no, he "gave himself for us," he laid down his life for us, he died upon the cross for us, "that he might redeem us from iniquity."

Nor was this deliverance from sin as well as punishment intended merely for our advantage, but for his. He had an end to accomplish for himself. He died to purify us, not merely that we might be pure and therefore happy, but also to purify a people for himself; a possession of his own, a Church, a body of which he should be Head, a kingdom of which he should be the Sovereign. Over none but a purified and holy kingdom could he condescend to reign. Over none but a purified and holy body could he be the Head. Justification would have done but half the work for which Christ died; his end would not have been accomplished if he had not redeemed us from iniquity as well as condemnation, if he had not purified a people for himself, for his own use and his own honor; a people in their measure like himself, his own exclusively, his own forever, his inalienable right, his indefeasible possession, his "peculiar people."—*J. A. Alexander.*

STEEP THE SEED.

"They that sow in tears shall reap in joy."

An old divine states that he knew two farmers: both sowed good seed, while one always got a better harvest than the other. At last the one whose harvest was generally inferior asked the other how it was to be accounted for, and ended by saying, "My seed is always as good as yours." "True," was the reply; "but, friend, I steep my seed and you do not." He was a godly man, and meant he *prayed over it*.