

The Blood of Christ

in various aspects as expressive of its value.

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It is only God Himself that knows fully the value of the precious blood of Christ. For though He has communicated to us largely of His own thoughts respecting it, we still have to say of this, as of so many other things, that now we know in part (1 Cor. 13: 12). But two things are ever closely connected — a vigorous spiritual life, and a high estimate of its place and value. Hence in all times of spiritual dearth and barrenness, the true doctrine of the blood is always lost sight of, if not denied. It is on this account the more necessary that we should seek to be filled with God's thoughts about it - not only that we may understand what it has effected for the believer, but also that we may, in measure, comprehend our indebtedness to Him who humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross, to redeem us unto God.

We, therefore, propose to point out some of its aspects as they are found in the Scriptures — some of its aspects of efficacy, which express to us its wondrous value. It need hardly be said that by the blood of Christ we mean that blood which He shed in His death on the cross - the blood as representing the life (for the life is in the blood), which He laid down when He bare our sins in His own body on the tree (1 Peter 2: 24).

One of the chief aspects presented to us in the Scriptures is, *that the blood of Christ was our ransom*. This is expressed most clearly in several passages in the Word of God. 'Forasmuch as ye know,' says Peter, 'that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold . . . but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot' (1 Peter 1: 18, 19). Again, 'In whom we have redemption through His blood' (Eph. 1: 7). The redeemed also sing, 'Thou hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood,' etc. Rev. 5: 9). The Lord Himself expresses the same truth when He says, 'The Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many' (Matt. 20: 28). Now, the meaning of 'ransom' is a price paid for redemption; of 'redemption,' to buy back or out of a state of captivity or bondage. If, therefore, the blood of Christ was our ransom, it involves several things.

(1) We were in bondage or captivity; or there had been no opportunity for a ransom, no scope for redemption. And this is precisely what the Scriptures declare. 'Ye were,' says the Apostle Paul, 'the servants of sin' (Rom. 6: 17). We also read in the Epistle to the Hebrews of those 'who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage' (Heb. 2: 15). Hence it is that Egypt (for the children of Israel were there in bondage) is always typical of our natural state and condition. As, therefore, we look to the past, we have ever to exclaim with Ezra, when humbling himself before God on account of the sins of His people, 'We were bondmen.' Such was the condition of every believer; and is the condition of every one who does not believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. 'Know ye not,' says the Apostle, writing to the saints at Rome, 'that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his *servants ye are to whom ye obey*; whether of sin unto

death, or of obedience unto righteousness?' (Rom. 6: 16). Every unconverted one is therefore in bondage; 'for by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned' (Romans 5: 12); and hence, too, the power of death — God's just judgment against sin — is wielded by Satan over every unbeliever.

(2) The blood of Christ was the price, or ransom, paid for our deliverance or redemption from this state of bondage and captivity. (See the passages already cited, especially 1 Peter 1: 18, 19; Matthew 20: 28.) For He died in our stead, 'the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God' (1 Peter 4: 18). Thereby He met and satisfied all the claims which a Holy God had against us: He accepted the whole of our responsibilities: 'He bare our sins in His own body on the tree' (1 Peter 2: 24): in a word, He paid the whole of our debt, and the price was His own blood. And thus His blood-shedding — the offering up of His own life for us — availed both to vindicate the holiness of God, yea, to glorify Him even about our sins, and to secure for us eternal redemption. Well, therefore, might it be termed precious blood! So precious as to exceed all finite estimate. It is precious according to the infinite judgment of God; and yet nothing less would have availed. Had there been collected all the wealth, the gems, and costly stones, all the diamonds of Africa and Brazil — all these riches would have been as dust before God. For 'they that trust themselves in their wealth, and boast themselves in the multitude of their riches, none of them can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him (for the redemption of their soul is precious, and it ceaseth for ever): that he should still live for ever, and not see corruption' (Ps. 49: 6-9). God only could provide the ransom. He gave it in the gift of His Son; and the ransom was paid in the blood-shedding on the Cross. Blessed be His name!

(3) Believers are, therefore, redeemed. They are now, not shall be, redeemed — brought back out of the house of their bondage unto God. How it thus strengthens our souls to look back upon our redemption as a completed thing! and as we are told that the means of our redemption was the blood of Christ, how it fills our hearts with gratitude and love!

The blood of Christ is presented to us in another aspect, as *cleansing from sin*. 'The blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanseth us from all sin' (John 1: 7). 'Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood' (Rev. 1: 5). So also the elder, speaking to John of the great multitude, says that they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb (Rev. 7: 14). The same idea is conveyed when forgiveness, or remission of sins, is spoken of as procured by the blood of Christ. Two or three specific statements will explain how this process of cleansing is effected.

(1) God sees every believer as under the protection of the blood of Christ. As soon as the eye of faith is directed to the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world, the soul stands before God in all the efficacy of His sacrifice. For God, in His grace, has accepted the blood-shedding of Christ on behalf of all who believe; and faith, therefore, is the only connecting link between the soul and the blood. The believer is thus as completely under its protecting power as Israel was under the protection of the blood of the Passover Lamb in the land of Egypt.

(2) God sees no guilt where He sees the blood of Christ. The blood has made atonement for sin, covered it up even from the eyes of God. This was typified by the Mercy-seat. In the Ark of the Covenant were the tables of stone, containing the law which Israel had promised to obey as

the condition of blessing. But their whole history was a history of transgression; and hence, if God had looked upon the broken law, He must have intervened in righteous judgment. There was therefore upon the ark, and covering up the broken law from view, the mercy-seat sprinkled with the blood of atonement. God thus saw, instead of the sins of the people, the atoning blood, and thereby He could still maintain with them relationships of mercy and grace. In the same way Christ is our mercy-seat through faith in His blood (Romans 3: 25); and God, therefore, does not see our sins, but the blood, and where He sees the blood — and He sees it on every believer — He sees no sin.

(3) Believers are thus cleansed by the blood of Christ. The effect of its application through faith is, that they 'are clean every whit.' We thus sing of being

'White in His blood most precious,

Till not a spot remains.'

Alas, that our faith should sometimes fail to equal our expressions! For we have the sure testimony of the Word of God that every trace of guilt has been removed by the precious blood. 'If the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh; *how much more shall the blood of Christ*, who through the Eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?' (Hebrews 9: 13, 14).

(4) It may be added with advantage at the present time, that Scripture knows nothing of a reapplication of the blood of Christ to the believer. Once cleansed, he is cleansed for ever before God. Thus, the whole point of the argument in Hebrews 10: 1-14 is the abiding efficacy of the sacrifice of Christ, in contrast with the necessity for repeated sacrifices under the law. 'For by one offering He hath *perfected for ever* them that are sanctified' (Heb. 10: 14; see also Heb. 9: 24-26). The blood, once shed and presented before God, is ever there in all its value for our souls, so that the question of guilt can never more be raised against us. Otherwise we could not be, as we are, in a position of abiding acceptance in the Beloved. Defilements in our daily walk we undoubtedly contract; but God has made a gracious provision for these in the washing of water by the Word, ministered through the advocacy of Jesus Christ the Righteous (Ephesians 5: 26; 1 John 2: 1; Psalm 119: 9, 11). But we remain without spot before God in virtue of the blood; for 'he that is washed (bathed) needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit' (John 13: 10).

In the Epistle to the Romans we are said to be *justified by His blood* (Rom. 5: 9) — i.e., in the virtue of His blood. The blood of Christ was so precious in the eyes of God, because in His death He drank to its very dregs the cup of wrath that was due to our sins (for He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities); and thereby He made atonement to God so adequate and complete, that on this foundation God could come out of His place, meet and bring back the sinner to Himself, pardon his sins, and righteously justify every one who believes in Christ.

Our justification, therefore, is God's response to the value of the blood; yea, we might add, to the claims which it established upon Him. For what did our Lord say when upon the earth, and about to depart and go to the Father? 'I have glorified Thee on the earth: I have finished the work which Thou gavest me to do. And now, O Father, glorify me with Thine own self with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was' (John 17: 4, 5). God has heard that prayer; He has glorified Christ; and He has set Him there in the glory at His own right hand, because of the infinite value in His sight of the blood which Christ shed on Calvary; for it was by that blood-shedding that He pre-eminently glorified God; in that then He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross. 'Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again' (John 10: 17).

And inasmuch as He has glorified Christ, He will also glorify us, for 'whom He justified, them He also glorified' (Romans 8: 30). Our justification is thus, in one aspect, but the commencement of God's acknowledgement of the value of the blood, inasmuch as His full estimate of its efficacy on our behalf will only be expressed when we are glorified together with Christ — when we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him as He is (1 John 3: 2).

We are, moreover, taught that believers are *sanctified by the blood of Christ*. We thus read, 'Wherefore Jesus also, that He might *sanctify* the people with His own blood, suffered without the gate' (Heb. 13: 12). 'By the which will we are *sanctified* through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once' (Heb. 10: 10).

Now, we shall best understand the nature of the sanctification here intended, by a reference to Leviticus (of which, it may be said in passing, the Hebrews is the Holy Spirit's own exposition). We read there, in the account of the consecration of Aaron and his sons, that Moses took of the blood of the ram of consecration, and 'put it upon the tip of Aaron's right ear, and upon the thumb of his right hand, and upon the great toe of his right foot,' etc.; that he also did the same thing to Aaron's sons; and, finally, that 'Moses took of the anointing oil, and *of the blood which was upon the altar*, and sprinkled it upon Aaron, and upon his garments, and upon his sons, and upon his sons' garments with him; and *sanctified* Aaron, and his garments, and his sons, and his sons' garments with him' (Lev. 8: 23-30.) The ninth of the Hebrews may also be read in connection with this point.

As to the sanctification intended, it is evident that it is not the holiness wrought out in the believer by the Spirit of God. It is simply a qualification for access, as in the case of Aaron and his sons, into the immediate presence of God: a separation from unholy things, and a consecration to, or a hallowing for, holy uses — the service of God. It is, indeed, a qualification for worship; for only purged worshippers can come before the throne of grace. This *sanctification is effected for the believer by the blood of Christ*. For as soon as ever we come by faith under the value of the blood of Christ, God claims us for Himself; He reminds us that we are not our own, and the blood upon us is the sign that we are His — hallowed, consecrated, sanctified for His service — the seal of our consecration (for there was also the anointing oil) being the gift of the indwelling Spirit.

We are thus blood-bought, blood-washed, and blood-sanctified worshippers - 'a royal priesthood,' an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus

Christ' (1 Peter 2: 5-9). We have 'boldness to enter into the holiest *by the blood of Jesus*, by a new and living way which He hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, His flesh,' etc. (Heb. 10: 19, 20). Two very solemn inferences flow from this truth. The first is our obligation to keep our priestly garments undefiled. They must be clean that bear the vessels of the Lord. The second is that our only place of worship is in the holiest — within the veil. We need not point out how this truth has been lost sight of on every hand; for do not 'places of worship' abound? Let us be the more careful to maintain that, as sanctified by the blood, we have access into the very presence of God; and not only to maintain our personal privilege, but to see that when we are gathered together unto the name of Christ, we do enter by the blood of Jesus through the rent veil into the holiest of all.

We are taught also that *reconciliation is effected by the blood of Christ*. 'For it pleased (the Father) that in Him should all fulness dwell; and having made peace through the blood of His cross, by Him to reconcile all things unto Himself; by Him (I say) whether (they be) things in earth or things in heaven. And you that were sometimes alienated, and enemies in (your) mind by wicked works, yet now hath He reconciled in the body of His flesh through death,' etc. (Col. 1: 19-22.) So also in Ephesians, 'But now in Christ Jesus, ye who some time were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.' (Eph. 2: 13; see also Romans 5: 10, 11).

In the first of these passages we get, as will be observed, a double reconciliation. The Colossian believers are said to have been reconciled; and further, it is said that all things are *to be* reconciled. A word or two may be given to each of these aspects.

Saints then are reconciled through the blood of Christ. This is of course involved in the other aspects dealt with; but the thought here is different. Men are looked at, not as in captivity, needing redemption, nor as guilty, needing cleansing — though both of these things are true - but as at enmity with God — at a distance from Him — 'alienated and enemies in mind.'

Now it is of the first importance to see clearly that it was not God who needed to be reconciled to us; it was we who needed to be reconciled to Him. He never had enmity in His mind towards the guiltiest of His creatures; for He is love. But the sin of man had raised up a barrier which stopped the outflow of His love; for He is a holy God, and could not, and cannot overlook sin. Still He so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have everlasting life (John 3: 16); and no sooner had 'the finished work' of Christ been accomplished, than the message of the Gospel was everywhere addressed to sinners, '*Be ye reconciled to God*' (2 Cor. 5: 20); and every one who heard and believed was reconciled through the blood; for every question concerning sin had been settled on the cross, and God could therefore now righteously embrace every one that believed on Christ. His love had 'broken every barrier down,' and thus He could bring the sinner into everlasting reconciliation with Himself. Hence, being reconciled through the blood, our portion is the peaceful enjoyment of His love. For we are presented in Christ 'holy and unblamable and unprovable in His sight;' we are in a state of perfect acceptance, and God can therefore rest over us in His love, for all that He is, is satisfied with us in Christ.

The second character of reconciliation is universal, embracing all things — things in earth and things in heaven. It is not only therefore for men, but also for *things* that Christ died; and

thus the virtue of His precious blood will extend to the whole creation; for 'the creature (creation) itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God' (Rom. 8: 21). Marvellous efficacy of the precious blood! For the blessedness of the dispensation of the fulness of times, when all things in heaven and earth are gathered together in one in Christ, will all flow from its virtue and power!

The New Covenant is *ratified or founded in the blood of Christ*. 'This is my blood of the New Testament (or covenant),' said our Lord to His disciples as He handed to them the cup when seated with them at the Passover table (Matt. 26: 28). We also read in the Hebrews of 'the blood of the everlasting covenant' (Heb. 13: 20). The force of these expressions will be best understood by a reference to the Mosaic covenant. We are told that 'Moses took half of the blood (the blood of the offerings just sacrificed), and put it in basins; and half of the blood he sprinkled on the altar. And he took the book of the covenant, and read in the audience of the people: and they said, All that the Lord hath said will we do, and be obedient. And Moses took the blood, and sprinkled it on the people, and said, *Behold the blood of the covenant which the Lord hath made with you concerning all these words*' (Ex. 24: 6-8; see also the same passage cited in Heb. 9: 18-20).

God thus confirmed His covenant with Israel before Sinai by blood — the blood of animals; but the new covenant He has ratified by the blood of Christ. By so much more, therefore, as the blood of Christ is more precious than the blood of oxen, is the new covenant of more value than the old. In other words, by confirming the new covenant with the blood of His Son, God has declared not only its everlasting and immutable character, but also the priceless nature of the blessings which He has thereby secured to His people. In the olden time He often encouraged them to rest in the certainty of His word and promise. 'If,' said He, 'ye can break my covenant of the day, and my covenant of the night, and that there should not be day and night in their season, then may also my covenant be broken with David my servant,' etc. (Jer. 23: 20). But now He lays the foundation for the faith of His people (if we may so speak) in the blood of His Son. For the gift of His Son to death is surely the most irrefragable proof that could be offered to a doubting heart. It is thus the Apostle reasons, 'He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?' (Rom. 8: 33).

It is in the fulfilment of the new covenant, thus sealed with the blood of Christ, that Israel's hopes of future blessing securely rest (see Heb. 8: 6-13). They rashly entered into the engagement of obedience as a condition of fulfilment under the first. But having failed, God now acts in grace, and in the unfolding of His purposes. will secure the inheritance designed for them; but they, even as we, will owe it all to the precious blood of Christ.

The blood of the Lamb is pointed out in Revelation as *the means of victory over Satan*. He is represented as seeking, by accusing before God, to compass the condemnation of the saints who will then be on the earth, and it is added that 'they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony' (Rev. 12: 11). So should it be with us now. Satan, as we know from several Scriptures, is constantly accusing the people of God; and our own hearts will confess that, if some of his accusations are false, others are true. But what if they are true? 'The blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanseth us from all sin.' There may be much need for humiliation and self-judgment, but with all his enmity he cannot raise again the question of our

guilt, for the blood has made us before God whiter than snow. 'And we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous' (1 John 1: 1), who meets all the accusations of our adversary with the abiding and everlasting efficacy of the blood. We may therefore quietly rest; for though we are weak and failing, our Advocate is strong, and never fails: He knows all the subtleties of the accuser, and loves to refute all his accusations, and to clear us from all his aspersions.

'Though the restless foe accuses,

Sins recounting like a flood;

Every charge our God refuses:

Christ hath answered with His blood.'

In the passage cited, the word of their testimony is conjoined with the blood of the Lamb as the means of victory. The word of testimony is the sword of the Spirit, with which, like our blessed Lord, we are able to repel the assaults of Satan upon ourselves. But just in proportion to our knowledge of the value of the blood, as meeting his accusations, will be our strength in wielding the sword of the Spirit in our personal conflicts with the foe. May we be increasingly taught the value of the blood, and the use of the sword; and thus we shall be more than conquerors through Him that hath loved us.

The Lord Jesus Christ exercises *His priesthood on behalf of His People in virtue of the blood*. 'But Christ being come, an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; neither by the blood of goats and calves, *but by His own blood*, He entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption' (Heb. 9: 11, 12; see also 24-26th verses). If, therefore, our names are borne upon the breast and upon the shoulder of our High Priest in the presence of God — thus upheld before Him by strength and love; if we are continually receiving mercy and grace, succour in our temptations, sympathy in our trials, strength in our infirmities, consolation in our sorrows; yea, if all our wilderness needs are constantly met and satisfied through the ministrations of our High Priest, it is because of the infinite efficacy of His own precious blood.

But space fails in recounting the manifold aspects of the blood of Christ; for all that God in His grace has made us, and all that we shall be when 'for ever with the Lord,' all the glories of Christ Himself, all that we shall share with Him, as well as the perfectness of the new creation, which will find its full outward expression in the new heavens and the new earth wherein righteousness will dwell — where everything will be perfect, according to the estimate of God — all these things will be results of the blood of Christ. God Himself is the eternal source of all; but the blood of Christ was His own appointed way of securing the fulfilment of His own thoughts and purposes of love.

Surely, then, as we meditate on these things, our hearts will bow afresh before God in adoration for the gift of His well-beloved Son. And as the blood of Christ ever awakens our highest praise while we wait for this coming, so we find that the Lamb 'as it had been slain' will

be the central object of praise in heaven. 'And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for *thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation*' (Rev. 5: 9). And when the new Jerusalem shall come down from God out of heaven, the glory of God will lighten it, and *the Lamb will be the light thereof*.

Well then might we cry with the beloved Apostle, 'Unto Him that loveth us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father; To Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen' (Rev. 1: 5, 6).

But what of you, beloved reader? Professing to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, are you really under the shelter of His precious blood? Let there be no uncertainty with you on this point. 'Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, *and drink His blood*, ye have no life in you' (Rom. 6: 53). 'Blessed are they that wash their robes' (correct reading), 'that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city' (Rev. 22: 14). 'He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly' (Rev. 22: 20). May God, in His infinite grace, grant that every one who reads these pages may be cleansed in the precious blood, so that he may be able to respond, 'Amen: even so come, Lord Jesus.'

'Blest Lamb of God, Thy precious blood

Shall never lose its power,

Till every ransomed saint of God

Be saved to sin no more.'