

The Saviour and the Sinner.

J. G. Bellett.

Article 4 of 47 **Short Meditations**

(Cavenagh, 1866.)

Nothing but *the blood* of Christ for a sinner, the whole Word of God proclaims, from first to last. All the expiation he can enjoy, all the reconciliation he can plead, all the answer he can have to the demands of the throne where judgment sits to maintain the rights of God, depends upon it.

It is the blood of the Lamb of God that is presented of God to the faith of a sinner, and it is that which the faith of a sinner apprehends and trusts.

As soon as sin entered, the sacrifice which had been prepared in eternal counsel, was revealed. The very first promise published *the death* of Christ, the bruising of the heel of the Seed of the Woman. This was the thing communicated to man as a sinner — the only thing — the sinner trusted himself to it — Adam came forth from his covert, and trusted the reconciling virtue of the sacrifice of the Lamb of God.

As soon as the due time came for the public display of redemption, again it was *the blood* of Christ that was revealed, and that only. Israel in the land of death and judgment had to be delivered. They had found grace in the eyes of the God of their fathers, and they must become a people sheltered in the place of judgment, and redeemed out of the place of death. It is that precious blood, and that only, which is used on that great occasion. It was to be put outside on the lintel of the Hebrew houses in the land of Egypt, and the Hebrew family within had to feed on that victim whose blood was thus redeeming them. Nothing more. In a suited manner they were to feed on the roasted Lamb — not raw nor sodden at all with water, but roast with fire, every part of it. This was to be their food. In an Old Testament style, Christ was as if saying to them, "Take, eat: this is my body."

And according to this, is what we get in the New Testament. I read this in Matt. 26, or in Mark 14, or in Luke 22. The Lord is there as in the night of the Passover, or in Exodus 12. A living Christ He then was, but He presents Himself as a *crucified* Christ, a slain Lamb, a sacrifice on the altar. He overlooks Himself as a living One, and apprehends Himself as a Victim. He takes bread in His hand, and says, "Take, eat: this is my body." He takes the cup in His hand, and says, "This cup is the New Testament in my blood." It is the crucified Christ which the living Christ thus presents to the thought and acceptance of sinners, as the foundation and title of all our blessing.

This was giving to the elect family the paschal Lamb whose blood was on the door-posts as their shelter and deliverance. They were to take and eat it — as in the night of Egypt.

In the Gospel by John we do not get the scene at the Supper. We have no "Take, eat: this is my body;" but we have a word between the Lord and the Jews, in which the great secret of the Supper is published by Him to them. In the sixth chapter He fells the multitude, that He was the bread that came down from heaven, the true Manna, of which if a man eat, he lives for ever. But pursuing His way through that conversation, He declares, that this bread from heaven was His flesh, which He would give for the life of the world, that His flesh was meat indeed and His blood was drink indeed. That is — that it is by receiving Him as *the Lamb of God*, by going to Him as *in death* and on *the altar*, the sinner gets redemption and life. Not by knowing Him as a *living* but as a *crucified* Christ we get the salvation of God.

All this is so, in great certainty and simplicity. From the beginning, the blood of Christ, the sacrifice of the Lamb of God, has been presented to sinners as the *one* object on which they must fix the eye of faith, and to which they must give their full, entire confidence. The living Lamb does not find place in this great mystery of redemption — further than as the life witnessed the fitness of the Lamb for the altar — it is the slain Lamb, the crucified Jesus, that is everything in the great account of the redemption of sinners. The blood of the God-man, and that alone and only, was the ransom.

Not only Patriarchal, Mosaic, and Evangelic Scripture teaches us this, as we have now seen, — as the third of Genesis, the twelfth of Exodus, the institution of the Supper, and the sixth of John, — but in the Epistles we learn the same. The tenth of Hebrews is strikingly to this purpose. There the Christ of God is heard to say, "Lo, I come." But for what end was He to come? Was it to live? No, but to die. Why was a body prepared Him? Was it to act in it, and to pass thirty-three years in it in the active service of a Witness and Minister of God and the Father? No; but to offer it on the Cross. (Heb. 10: 5-10) He did live surely, and that under the Law, the true Israelite. He did live surely, and that in such holy, gracious ministry as witnessed God and the Father. But that Scripture (Heb. 10: 5-10) overlooks the life, and at once bears the One who came into the world onwards to the Cross — just as His own language at the Supper-table, as we saw, overlooked Him as the living One, to present Him as the crucified One. And then, in that same Scripture, we learn that it is by the offering up of the body, by the blood of the Son in the body that was prepared for Him, that sinners are sanctified and perfected. This we read again in the thirteenth chapter of the same Epistle, "Jesus, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered without the gate" — the sanctification of a sinner depending altogether on the blood of Christ.*

* I fully admit sanctification in another sense, as I may say, the sanctification of a saint — the gradual purifying of an elect one under the truth by the Spirit. (John 17: 17) But I speak here of the sanctification of a sinner.

I say no more than this, though all Scripture and the Epistles distinctly would furnish so much. The shadowy ordinances of the Law, and the direct dogmatic teaching of the Apostles, all join in telling us, that the death or blood of the Christ of God is everything for a sinner.

But if God thus communicate His mind, faith so apprehends and receives it. The fifty-third of Isaiah is a witness of this. There, the faith of the awakened Israel of God may, in passing, glance at the person, life, and ministry of the Christ, but it is but in passing — they go onward to the Cross, and there they find everything for the perfecting of their conscience as sinners, and the spring and foundation of all the glories of Christ Himself. At the Cross they discover that the chastisement of our peace was there, the wounding for our transgressions was there, and our healing by His stripes; and that having made His soul this offering for sin, He could see before Him His family, and the full accomplishment of the good pleasure of God in the vindication and display of His own glories for ever. "He shall see His seed, He shall prolong His days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in His hand."

So, the joy of the life of faith in Paul the Apostle of the Gentiles, finds its spring in the same death of the Lord for him. (See Gal. 2: 20, 21.) So, he presents that object to the faith of sinners, as the only object of the faith that justifies. (Rom. 4: 23-25.) And so again, he teaches us that Christ crucified is singly offered to the sight of a sinner that he may be blest as with faithful Abraham. (Gal. 3: 1-14) "Who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree," says another Apostle. (1 Peter 2: 24) "The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin," says another. (1 John 1: 7) But this may

be enough; though all Scripture, again we say, Patriarchal, Mosaic, Prophetic, Evangelic, and Apostolic, all join in putting "the Lamb of God" and "the sinner" together for redemption and justification — the Lamb provided in the riches of the grace of God, and accepted by the faith of the sinner, through the inworking, drawing, and illuminating teaching, of God the Holy Ghost.

And then, that which is thus given in grace, accepted by faith, and witnessed in all Scripture, is to be celebrated for ever in realms of glory. This we get in what I may call the only remaining portion or division of Scripture, the Apocalypse. While still on earth, the saints there let us know, that they have found their object for praise, and their spring of joy, in the Lamb that was slain. We hear them break forth, while John was addressing them still here, in that fervent strain, "Unto Him that loved 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." (Rev. 1: 5, 6) And after they have been translated, after they have left the earth for heaven, and have reached the home of glory, we hear them again in like joy. "And they sang 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; and hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth." (Rev. 5: 9, 10.) And the realms of glory as well as the home of glory, the nations on the millennial footstool, as well as the glorified in the heavens, echo the strain — for it is the one fond, commanding thought that shall occupy eternity and fill creation — for we hear again this kindred voice — "These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." (Rev. 7: 14.) They may not be able to add a word about their reigning, as the glorified did, they may have only to know that they shall be before the throne, and serve God day and night in His Temple, that all their tears shall be wiped away, and that they shall be led by the Lord to fountains of living waters; (verses 15-17;) but "the blood of the Lamb" is the common object of praise, the common spring of joy, the one only title to all blessedness, whether of the glorified, translated saints, or of the redeemed nations that occupy the earth in millennial days of restitution and refreshing. Sinners now travelling and struggling in unredeemed bodies, and in pilgrim, militant conditions, and sinners by-and-by in either the home of glory in heaven or in the realms of glory on earth, know nothing but the Saviour in the blood that He shed for them, in the life that He gave up for them, as the Lamb of God, on the Cross at Calvary. All glory in that, but in that only.