

THE PRECIOUS BLOOD OF CHRIST

All of God's dear children trust in the precious blood of the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world. They know, as Mr. Moody tersely puts it, that the *blood of Christ* is the principal topic of God's revelation, and the foundation of his great plan of salvation. They know that the expression, "blood of Christ," somehow stands for sacrifice of Christ, though they are sadly confused by false ideas on the so-called "trinity," and consequently upon *what* our Lord Jesus gave as the sacrifice for sins.

In this "evil day" the great Adversary of God and his truth is taking advantage of this confusion, this lack of clearness of understanding, to overthrow faith in the ransom, the foundation doctrine of Christianity. The process is, to scoff at the idea of blood cleansing from sin, and to insinuate that most Christians believe in having literal blood sprinkled on their hearts, or that they are cleansed from sin by plunging into a literal fountain filled with blood drawn from Immanuel's veins. Thus the idea of blood-cleansing is scouted as being on a par with the doctrine [R1230 : page 3] of everlasting torment, and belonging to the savage minds of the "dark ages."

As a matter of fact, no sane Christian people have ever held this literal and absurd view of the meaning of the blood of Christ. It has always been recognized as synonymous with *sacrifice*. Any fair-minded person can readily see this to be true as well of the use of the word blood by the Apostles, as in the hymns of all denominations of Christian people. Take that grand old hymn –

"There is a fountain filled with blood
Drawn from Immanuel's veins,
And sinners, plunged beneath that flood,
Lose all their guilty stains."

What could more clearly express the very essence of the Bible doctrine; and how absurd for any to try to make out that those who thus express their sentiments believe in a river of literal blood. The hymn expresses well and beautifully the very thought of the Prophet (Zech. 13:1), "In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David for sin and for uncleanness."

There is surely an object in this misrepresentation of the general views of Christian people. Is it to confuse the mind, excite disgust at the thought of blood, and swimming in rivers of blood, etc., and then under the warmth of the denial: "Such is not *my* belief even if my fathers did believe it," to point out to the confused one a theory which it is desired to impress? It looks very much that way. The theory then advanced is, that when Christ's *blood* is mentioned, the word blood stands for *carnal nature*, and the understanding should be – *Christ slew HIS carnal nature*, as an example of how all his followers and the world in general should slay *their* carnal natures.

Ah! no wonder that, with such a theory to advance, the great Adversary first tried to excite *disgust* for any and every thing connected with "the blood." He well knew that, unless *disgust* for "the blood" should be aroused and form a barrier of mental prejudice, some of God's children would be sure to examine the forty-three places where the Scriptures mention the blood of Christ, and the many more where they mention the blood of animals which typified his blood. And if they would but investigate, they would find that which would prove fatal to the theory he wished to establish as new light.

The few who look to God's word for instruction find that in these forty-three times that the blood of Christ is mentioned, neither our Lord nor the apostles once hint that the blood of Jesus represented the slaying of his carnal nature, nor that he had in or about him anything evil that required to be destroyed. They find,

on the contrary, that there was no *cause* of death found in him except in the sight of the hypocritical Pharisees. And they find that, to the contrary of the theory we are criticizing, these forty-three *inspired* testimonies on the subject declare unitedly, not that our Lord shed his blood *for* himself and as an example to all men to shed their blood for themselves and thus reach perfection, but that, whatever blood symbolizes, it is *his blood* that *cleanseth us* from all sin.

Yes, his blood became the basis for the forgiveness of our sins, made peace for us, opened up the way to reconciliation, and transferred us from the domain of sentenced culprits, back to sonship in the family of God. So says the great Apostle Paul – Col. 1:20; Heb. 9:12; 10:19; 13:12; Rom. 3:25; 5:9; Eph. 1:7; 2:13; Col. 1:14 and Acts 20:28-31. So declares the great Apostle Peter – 1 Pet. 1:2,19. So testifies the beloved Apostle John – 1 John 1:7; Rev. 1:5; 5:9; 7:14.

Truly the Word of God is sufficient that the man of God may be thoroughly furnished against all the wiles, glosses and sophistries of Satan. Even those who do not see clearly what *the blood* does signify or symbolize, can, without aid, quickly see that it means nothing at all like what this erroneous view would set forth. The idea of the blood of Christ signifying the slaying by him of *his carnal nature* is as far from the testimony of the above passages of God's Word as the East is from the West.

But what is the true significance of *the blood* of Christ when used in reference to our cleansing from sin, as in the above citations? If it does not mean literal blood, what does it mean?

We answer by giving God's definition of what blood represents or symbolizes. The *blood* is the *life*. (Gen. 9:4-6.) "For the life of the flesh is in the blood; and I have appointed it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls [lives, beings]:

for it is the blood [sacrificed life] that maketh atonement for the soul [or being]." – Lev. 17:11,14.

By accepting God's definition of what blood signified, in all the sacrifices, as well as in the case of the "one sacrifice for all" which our Lord Jesus presented, all confusion disappears. As blood represents the life, the shedding of blood represents the loss of life – death. So then, the expressions – the Lamb slain, the cleansing blood of the Lamb, the precious blood of Christ, no more refer to literal blood than to a literal lamb, but to the *death of Christ*. True, our Lord's side was actually pierced and blood flowed out, but the expression, "He hath redeemed us by his *blood*" (by his *death*), would have been equally true and proper, if not a drop of his literal blood had passed from his veins; for it merely signifies that he redeemed us by his *death* – by the sacrifice or *loss of his life*. Thus it is written, "He poured out his soul [being – life] unto death;" and again that he made "his soul [being – life] an offering for sin." – Isa. 53:12,10.

So then, God's people have always had the pith of the truth on this subject, when believing that the "blood of Christ" meant the *sacrifice* of Christ. That is the correct thought. Their difficulty is, that when they come in contact with errors their lack of a clear understanding of *what* sacrifice Christ did make for the sins of the world, combined with erroneous ideas of a trinity, make them liable to be led astray from the foundation doctrine of Christianity – "that Christ *died* for *our sins* according to the Scriptures." Finding that they cannot clearly analyze their own views, they are very susceptible to the false view we criticize, which first ridicules the idea which no one holds, that it is the literal blood of Christ which washes away our sins, and then offers the proposition, that Christ's *blood*, when referred to in Scriptures, represents his slaying of his own carnal nature and desires, as an example to men, how they must each slay his own carnal nature and desires. According to this unscriptural theory each man would be his own

Savior. And not only so, but if each would be a *great* Savior in proportion to the work accomplished, then the Lord Jesus would be the *least* of all; because, even those who claim that he had a carnal nature to crucify or slay cannot dispute that many men have far more of evil and sin working in their members to overcome than our Lord had. And if each slays sin in himself, the more degraded the man the greater the salvation, and the greater he is as his own Savior.

But let each compare this view briefly with the view presented in the above cited statements of the apostles respecting the blood of Christ – the *life* which he laid down on our behalf.

The life of the world in general was gone – forfeited in father Adam's failure when on trial – all not absolutely dead were dying. They were under the execution of the just sentence of God, "Dust thou art and unto dust shalt thou return." God had decreed a sentence which would most fully manifest the law of the universe – that no sinner shall live – and one which at the same time furnished an opportunity for revealing to angels and to men his unswerving justice, his great love, and his boundless wisdom and power. When God decreed *death* as the penalty for sin, so that a *ransom* (a corresponding price – a just one to die for [or instead of] the unjust one – Rom. 5:17) would be necessary to the release of mankind from the sentence, he did so in full view of the course he would pursue. His wisdom foresaw the results of leaving Adam to his own free will – that in his inexperience he would not submit his will to the will of his creator and would therefore get into sin and under the sentence of death – extinction. And his wisdom also foresaw how his love could work out a plan for the salvation of his creatures. And he foresaw that the well beloved and only begotten Son would humbly consent to carry out the divine plan – to leave the glory and honor of the heavenly nature, and as the *man* Christ Jesus give himself a *ransom* for Adam and his race. – Phil. 2:7,8; 1 Tim. 2:5,6.

Since the penalty was *death*, the ransom necessary to release the dead and dying world from the sentence under which all were, and to secure them restitution – resurrection – and an individual trial for *everlasting* life, was the *death* of this *perfect man* whom God thus provided. And this simple and easily comprehended plan was carried out. The man Christ Jesus gave himself a ransom for all; – he *died*, the just for the unjust; – he *died* for our sins. The dying on the cross, the drops of bloody sweat in Gethsemane, the pierced hands and side and flowing blood were not necessary to our *ransom*. None of these things were the penalties of sin. God's sentence against Adam – "dying thou shalt die" – did not specify what manner of death, nor what amount of suffering should be connected with it. Death alone was the penalty, and had God's will been such, for our Lord to have met death in any other form than crucifixion would have been equally our *ransom* price. [R1231 : page 3]

Many do not see that in our Lord two things were being accomplished at once. Our ransom was being provided, and our Lord's extreme fidelity to the Heavenly Father was being tested and proved in the same sacrifice. As our ransom, death in any form would do; but as an unbounded proof of his humility and obedience to the Father's plan, the shame of the cross was added. – Phil. 2:7,8.

The result of his *death* as it affects himself is that he is now highly exalted and made partaker of the divine nature, that all men should honor the Son even as they honor the Father. – Phil. 2:8,9; John 5:23.

The result of his death as it affects mankind is that it places the world in his hands as the purchaser, to the intent that, without violating the law and sentence of God (which he satisfied with his own [life] blood), he may restore men to perfection and offer everlasting life to all who will come into harmony with God's

perfect law through him – under his direction and assistance. [R1231 : page 3]

THIS IS JUSTIFICATION.

Thus we are justified by his blood [by the life which he laid down for us]: our sins and imperfections are passed over, forgiven, covered by the merit of the *ransom* which he gave. Not only sins past and present, but also all future sins – all that are directly or indirectly the results of Adam's transgression – all that are not our own, that our wills do not approve of, are not reckoned any longer to those who are *in* Christ Jesus. No wonder these have joy and peace as they realize that there is now no longer any condemnation against them. – Rom. 5:1; 8:1.

Here begins the work of sacrifice and crucifixion with Christ to which many are invited, but to which few respond. It is [R1231 : page 4] a mistake, however, to consider this *sacrificing* as a slaughter of our sins or as having anything to do with the "slaying of the enmity" mentioned by the Apostle. On the contrary (under the Law, which was typical), *no sacrifice* could be offered unto the Lord that had any blemish or imperfection – blemishes representing sin. So it is that no one is ever invited to become a sacrificer with Christ until he has *first* been justified from all things – cleansed from all sins – by the precious blood [sacrificed life] of Christ. And if these who are cleansed from sins – justified from all things – are told that they may present their bodies [*'holy* and acceptable unto God" through Jesus Christ] as living sacrifices, it must be their *justified selves* and not their sins that they present, and that the Lord proposes to accept.

The "enmity" which the Apostle declares Christ abolished (Eph. 2:15) was not sin in himself, nor anything in himself; but in or by the sacrifice of his flesh, the man Christ Jesus abolished the enmity or opposition of the Jewish Law Covenant, under which fleshly Israel labored. When that Covenant which they could not

keep was fulfilled by our Lord Jesus and passed away (Col. 2:14), all who had been under it were released from its requirements of absolute perfection which opposed and condemned them all, that they might receive through Christ *forgiveness* of sins – through faith in his blood.

The privilege of becoming joint-sacrifices with Christ is limited, as truly as is the privilege of becoming joint-heirs with him. "Now is the *acceptable* time." Both the privilege and the reward of sacrifice will end with this age. Now is the time when God will accept the living sacrifices of all who (*after* being justified from all sin by the blood of Christ) come unto God through him.

Such are not invited to sacrifice for their *own sins*, then, for their sins must be canceled before any sacrifice would be acceptable. But they are invited to sacrifice time, talent, influence, self-ease, and lawful self-gratification, in the service of the truth – in the general cause of God against the great enemy, Sin, and for the recovery of sinners out of it through Christ Jesus.

The sufferings of Christ, to a share in which all believers cleansed by his blood were invited during the Gospel age, will soon end. They will be filled up or completed. (Col. 1:24.) Then the glory will follow – the glory of Christ Jesus and also of all the members of his body, the church, those who suffered for the truth (not for their sins), sacrificing their justified selves with him and in the cause of God. Then the reign of righteousness will begin and none will have occasion to lay down his life for the truth's sake thereafter.

Many have believed in the precious blood and have had joy and peace in believing and then heard the call to the privilege of self-sacrifice with Christ; but *few* have responded, and hence few are chosen to be with him and behold and share his glory and his throne, and his new nature – the divine nature – far above both the

human and the angelic natures, even in their grandest perfections. Let us, acceptable to God through the precious blood, make our calling and election sure. Let us lay aside every weight and hindrance and run with patience the race of self-denial to the end – looking unto Jesus, the author of our faith, to finish it by receiving us to the heavenly mansion.

[R1110 : page 4]

"ENTERTAIN no thoughts which you would blush at in words."
