

THE PRECIOUS BLOOD OF CHRIST

"Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot." I Peter 1:18-19.

I have a sense of woeful inadequacy as I come to speak on "The Precious Blood of Christ". There is no language that can tell it, no philosophy that can explain it and no human genius that can delve into it and bring out its full riches. Expressions like "The Precious Blood of Christ" have more in them than we can ever get out of them. Therefore, our approach to this great subject must be deliberate, reverential and prayerful.

From the beginning God has always regarded blood as a most precious thing. Old Testament instilled in men a great reverence for blood. "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed" (Genesis 9:6). If blood is precious, how much more so the blood of Christ. Who can rate its value? The better it is known the higher it rises in the estimation of those who are acquainted with it. Yet it is neglected, and despised, by great multitudes who prefer mere trifles to it.

These days far too little is being said about the precious blood of Christ. Satan is turning the minds of too many away from this subject. He wants to tell people that they can be saved by reformation, by good works and by doing the best they can. But, according to the Word of God, the only way to God and heaven is blood-marked.

Scripture mentions blood four hundred fifty-five times.

"For I see the blood, I will pass over you" (Exodus 12:13).

"For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins" (Matthew 26:28).

"Take ye therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood" (Acts 20:28).

"But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, we were justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him" (Romans 5:8-9).

"In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace" (Ephesians 1:7).

"Now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ" (Ephesians 2:13).

"Having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven" (Colossians 1:20).

"Almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission" (Hebrews 9:22).

"But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin" (I John 1:7).

"And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood" (Revelation 1:5).

A crimson thread runs through the Bible. The first greeting that Christ received was that which hailed the power of His blood when John the Baptist cried, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29). The last salutation which Christ will receive will be the song of the redeemed, "And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. 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. Amen" (Revelation 1:5-6).

It is good to be reminded that there are some things which silver and gold cannot do. They can buy pleasure, command service and open many doors that would otherwise remain closed. People, who have been accustomed to look on their money as the key to every treasure-chest, are sometimes startled when they discover how little it can really do. But there are some things which can be done only by blood.

I. The Blood Of Christ Redeems.

To redeem means to set free by the payment of a ransom. The precious blood of Christ redeems from the curse of the law which said, "This do, and live." All of us have been slaves to the law, but Christ paid the ransom price for us, so the law is no longer our tyrannical master. We are now free from it. "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us" (Galatians 3:13).

When Peter said that Christ redeemed us, the world was one-half slave. Men were constantly being bought and sold, and that regardless of color. When a man was held in bondage as a slave, his family or some kindhearted friend, if possessing the means to do so, would redeem the man from slavery with gold or silver or precious stones. That is the meaning that lies back of this great word "redeem". Christ paid the price of our redemption. And how great that price was! It was nothing less than His own precious blood.

Christ redeemed us from the manner of life received from our fathers. This futile manner of life was passed down to the children from their fathers through the channels of heredity, teaching, example and environment. Children are born with depraved natures, and, if their parents are unsaved, they live in homes where evil practices are observed. The Christian is liberated from his manner of life before he was saved, which failed to meet God's standards and requirements.

Over the portals of a church in Germany is the figure of a fine lamb cut in the stone. A man who worked on the steeple of the church lost his footing and plunged to the ground below. A flock of sheep were grazing in the churchyard, and the man fell on a lamb. The lamb was

killed, but the man's life was saved. In his gratitude he cut into the stone over the doors of the church the lamb that had saved his life. So we are forgiven and saved from the penalty of sin and death by Christ Who is the Lamb of God. He, to rescue me from danger, interposed His precious blood. The blood of Christ, which was shed for our redemption, is the proof of God's love for us.

II. The Blood Of Christ Reconciles.

Man's natural condition is that of alienation and separation from God. As the prophet said, "But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear" (Isaiah 59:2). Sin alienates, separates and expels man from the presence of God. Cain sinned and went out from God's presence. Judas sinned and went out. Peter sinned and went out and wept bitterly.

How can man be reconciled to God? It is by the precious blood of Christ. Many of us have felt the power of Christ's atoning blood. We have been reconciled to God by the death of His Son. None can be reconciled to God except by the precious blood of Christ.

III. The Blood Of Christ Cleanses.

At first that sounds like a strange paradox. How could blood cleanse? Blood makes a stain which is deep and distinct, and which every evildoer dreads to leave behind him as an evidence of guilt. But here is the great paradox. Instead of staining, the blood of Christ removes the stain of sin. Instead of defiling, it washes white the soul of the believer in Christ.

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

At the Parliament of Religions held in Chicago during the Columbian Exposition in 1893, there were representatives of thirty-six different religions or cults on the platform. Each representative spoke on the merits of his own religion, and when all had finished Dr. Joseph Cook spoke in behalf of Christianity. He advanced toward the audience and gave an imitation of Shakespeare's "Lady Macbeth" as she came on the stage with bloody hands after her crime. He turned to Dr. Hale, the Unitarian, and said, "Have you sir, anything in your religion that will wash away her sin?" A cloud passed over the face of Dr. Hale, and all the others too as he asked each the same question, to which each had to reply, "No." Then, coming to the front of the platform with his arms extended, Dr. Cook said, "I declare unto you the supremacy of the Gospel of Christ, for it will not only wash her hands but also her heart, because "The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin."

We must ever proclaim the message of "The Precious Blood of Christ." In New Jersey a train crew found that they could not proceed with their train, so they sent the flagman down the track to warn the approaching passenger train of the stoppage up the line. In a little while there was a terrible crash, but one engineer jumped and saved

his life. Later, there was a court inquiry to endeavor to fix the responsibility for the accident. The flagman was examined and testified that he went down the line and flagged the train, but that the engineer just signalled and went on. The engineer was called and asked if he saw a red flag to which he replied that he did not. He said the flagman waved a flag but that it was not a red one so he just waved in response and went on. When asked if he was color blind, he stated that he was not. Under guard the flagman went to get the flag he claimed that he waved. When they returned the mystery was solved. It was no longer a red flag, for from exposure it had faded out to be a dirty yellow. What a terrible calamity as a result of showing the wrong color!

Thus it is today with many who are waving the yellow flag of so-called salvation by man's character and by works instead of waving the red flag of the Gospel of Calvary's Cross.

"Upon a life I did not live
Upon a death I did not die
Another's life, another's death
I hang my soul eternally."