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The Preacher sought to find out acceptable words; and that which was written was upright, even words of truth. The words of the wise are as goads, and as nails fastened by the masters of assemblies, which are given from one shepherd. And further, by these, my son, be admonished: of making many books there is no end; and much study is a weariness of the flesh. Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter; fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man.—*Ecclesiastes*, 12 : 10-13.



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A T O N I N G B L O O D .

"THE BLOOD OF JESUS CHRIST CLEANSETH FROM ALL SIN"

1 John, 1 : 7.

SIN is a want of conformity to the law of God. It includes opposition to his will, rebellion against his government, ingratitude for his favors, and an impious refusal to serve and glorify him. No wonder, then, that sin is represented in Scripture as that abominable thing which Jehovah hates; that he cannot look upon it but with abhorrence; and that "he will by no means clear the guilty." Nor is this all: sin is not only an object of God's just displeasure, but it is as polluting and degrading as it is criminal. It is not merely an *offence*, but it is also a corroding *disease*, which, unless it be removed, must inevitably separate the soul from God, and render it wholly unfit for the pure joys of his presence.

With this evil every son and daughter of Adam is chargeable. "There is not a just man upon earth who doeth good and sinneth not." Eccles. 7 : 20. "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." Rom. 5 : 12. With the guilt of transgression every one of our race is by nature loaded, and with the pollution of this moral leprosy every soul is defiled. "If any man say he hath no sin, he deceiveth himself, and the truth is not in him."

And as sin is so odious in itself, so it is the parent of all misery. As it is that "accursed thing" which God has forbidden, and which is an abomination in his sight, so it ever brings with it its natural and unfailing consequence—the wrath of a holy God; all the miseries of this life; the death of the body; the blight and ruin of the soul; and, when not repented of, the pains of hell for ever. Nor is this a mere arbitrary consequence. The justice of God

is an essential attribute of his character. As the righteous Governor of the universe, it is impossible that he should fail to testify his displeasure against sin. He cannot receive the impenitent sinner to his favor without "denying himself," trampling on the authority of his own law, abandoning the dignity of his government, and setting an example to the subjects of his moral empire, adapted to encourage rebellion, and to introduce universal disorder. He can therefore no more omit to testify his fixed opposition to sin and sinners, than he can cease to be a righteous and holy Sovereign.

All this the method of salvation by Christ pre-supposes. The Gospel is addressed to us as sinners. All its commands, all its offers, all its exhortations and warnings, and all its "exceeding great and precious promises," proceed upon the principle that all those to whom it comes stand in need of a deliverer from guilt and pollution. Hence the Savior, we are told, was expressly called **JESUS**, because he came "to save his people from their sins." Matt. 1: 21. Accordingly, from sin, in every respect, the Gospel proclaims complete and eternal deliverance.

But *how* is this deliverance effected? By simply passing sin by; and dispensing with its threatened penalty? By a mere act of sovereign forgiveness, without any demonstration of God's abhorrence of evil? By no means. "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, *being made a curse for us.*" "We have redemption *through his blood*, even the forgiveness of sins according to the riches of his grace."

There is no doctrine more important than this. It lies at the foundation of all Christian faith and hope. If it were asked, What is the *essence* of the Gospel? The answer undoubtedly, ought to be, It is a gracious message which informs a race of lost, miserable sinners, how they may be delivered from the condemnation of sin by the atoning blood of the Son of God, and from the dominion and pollution of sin by the power of the Holy Spirit, given in virtue of the

vicarious, atoning sacrifice of the Redeemer, who came that he might "finish transgression, make an end of sin, make reconciliation for iniquity, and bring in everlasting righteousness." Daniel, 9 : 24.

Reader, are you not desirous to know in what manner "THE BLOOD OF JESUS CHRIST CLEANSETH FROM ALL SIN?" Your attention is earnestly requested to an humble attempt to throw light on this subject.

I. How does the blood of Christ cleanse from the CONDEMNATION OF SIN? How does it deliver men from the wrath and curse of God justly due for every transgression? We shall conceive more clearly of this subject by recurring for a moment to the language and the typical institutions of the Old Testament economy. Immediately after the fall of our first parents, God was pleased to command that the blood of animals should be poured out, and the flesh offered in sacrifice, by those who worshiped him, as an acknowledgment of their sins, and as a kind of figurative expiation of them. Not that "the blood of bulls or of goats could really take away sin," but he who brought and offered up the bleeding victim in obedience to the divine command, by this sacrifice made confession of his sins, and of his desert of death, and typically expressed his humble reliance on the atoning blood of the infinitely greater Sacrifice afterwards to be offered up once for all. Hence a large part of the worship of the ceremonial dispensation consisted in the daily offering of bloody sacrifices, which, typically and ceremonially, took away sin: that is, when they were regularly brought according to the divine prescription, the sacrificer was absolved from all liability to suffer the external penalty of transgression; and when they were offered with sincere and humble reliance on the atoning sacrifice of the Messiah to come, all guilt, all obligation to punishment was taken away, and the penitent and believing offerer accepted as righteous in the sight of God. In making this offering, he who brought the victim laid his

hand upon its head, as a kind of solemn symbolical transfer of sin from himself to the devoted animal, and as an acknowledgment that he himself deserved to die.

Besides this daily offering, once a year, on the great day of atonement, a similar but still more formal and solemn expiatory offering was made in behalf of the whole people. But the most remarkable bloody offering was that of the *Paschal Lamb*, intended to commemorate the deliverance of the children of Israel from bondage in Egypt, and more especially from the stroke of the destroying angel when the first-born of the Egyptians were slain. The blood of the slain lamb was ordered to be sprinkled upon the lintels and door-posts of the Israelitish houses, and all the families which had this mark on their dwellings were *passed over*, and spared by the destroying angel: thus teaching, by a most impressive type, that all who were washed in the blood of the great sacrifice, and none others, should be spared and accepted in the day of trial. In short, as the apostle to the Hebrews declares, "almost all things under the law were purged with blood, and without the shedding of blood there was no remission." Hebrews, 9 : 22.

All this was done, not that the literal blood of animals was expected to take away moral defilement, nor that a God of infinite benevolence delighted in the slaughter of innocent creatures on its own account; but as a series of "sacramental memorials" of man's desert of death, and of "the Lord's death" as the substitute and surety of all who should believe in his name.

Accordingly, when our blessed Savior came in the flesh, all these typical representations were fulfilled, and their meaning realized. These were "shadows;" Christ was the "substance" and the "end" of them all. These were "figures for the time then present; but Christ being now come, an High Priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood, he

entered once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us : for 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 consciences from dead works to serve the living God ?" Heb. 9 : 9-15.

But *how* does the blood of Christ deliver from the condemnation of sin ? By "the blood of Christ" we are to understand the death of Christ, which was effected by shedding his blood. Hence he is said to have "died for our sins," (1 Cor. 15 : 3 ;) that is, to "take away our sins, (Rom. 11 : 27 ;) to have "made his soul an offering for sin ;" to have "put away sin by the sacrifice of himself." Hebrews, 9 : 26. All that Christ underwent as the Redeemer of sinners, and which was consummated by shedding his blood on the cross, may be considered as comprehended under the general expression of his atoning blood. As the sacrifice under the ceremonial economy was not complete without actually shedding the blood of the victim, so the sacrifice of the Son of God, offered up once for all, was not finished until "he bowed his head" in the agony of expiring nature, and "gave up the ghost."

Our race had become miserable sinners. We had broken the holy law of God under which we were placed, and had rendered ourselves liable to all the weight of that dreadful penalty which it denounces against offenders. The language of this holy law is, "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them." Yet no one of Adam's race ever did render a perfect obedience to this law. Such, then, is our awful situation. We have transgressed the holy law of God times and ways without number. We have no righteousness of our own to meet its inexorable demands. We must die, or the justice of God must be tarnished ; or some one, able and willing, must pay, in our behalf, the mighty

debt which we owe to divine justice, and become our ransom. We can make no reparation for our sins; we are helpless and without hope in ourselves. Not all the men on earth, nor all the angels in heaven could deliver us from the grasp of divine justice armed with almighty power. But "what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God" accomplished by "sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us." Rom. 8: 4. Yes, this alternative, which has filled all heaven with wonder, joy, and praise, since the hour in which it was proclaimed—this amazing alternative was adopted in the counsels of eternal wisdom. The Son of God, the Lord of angels and of men, condescended to take our nature upon him—to appear in the form of a servant, and to obey and suffer as our substitute. He said, in the counsel of peace, "Let me take the place of the guilty. Let me die to save them. Deliver them from going down to the pit—I have found a ransom." The wonderful, the unparalleled offer was accepted. He who "thought it no robbery to be equal with God, took upon him the form of a servant; and being found in fashion as a man, humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." He "suffered for us, the just for the unjust." He, who was very God and very man in the same mysterious person, made himself a willing sacrifice for the sins of rebels. The Lord laid on him the iniquities of us all. "He hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." 2 Cor, 5: 21. Not that Christ literally *became a sinner*, or *deserved to be treated as a sinner*; but he took the law-place of sinners, and was treated *as if* he had been a sinner, that we, though most unworthy, might be treated, for his sake, *as if* we had fulfilled the law in our own persons. Accordingly "he made peace by the blood of his cross." He "gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity." There

is, therefore, now "no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus." They are "freely justified from all things from which they could not be justified by the law of Moses."

Thus does the blood of Jesus Christ cleanse from the CONDEMNATION OF SIN. It takes away from the true believer all liableness to punishment on account of sin. Though his sins still *deserve* the wrath of God, he is graciously acquitted and accepted through the merits of Christ's atoning sacrifice; and this acquittal has a respect not merely to *some* of his sins, but to *all of them*. This precious blood cleanseth from ALL SIN. The moment the regenerated soul embraces the Savior by faith, as "the Lord his righteousness," "though his sins were as scarlet, they become white as snow; though they were red like crimson, they are as wool." He is clothed in a "robe washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb." Isaiah, 1 : 18; Rev. 7 : 14.

But the apostate children of Adam need something more than cleansing from the *condemnation* of sin. Their nature is depraved. "The carnal mind is enmity against God," and while it remains under the reigning power of this depraved disposition, is altogether unfitted for communion with God, and incapable of participating in the joys of heaven. The soul must be "cleansed" from this moral defilement, this spiritual leprosy, before it can be "meet for the inheritance of the saints in light." Accordingly the Scriptures teach that,

II. The blood of Jesus Christ cleanses effectually and completely FROM THE POWER AND POLLUTION OF SIN, as well as from its condemnation. "Without holiness no man shall see the Lord." It is just as essential to our eternal well-being that we be restored to the *image* of God, as that we be restored to his *favor*. Hence it is a vital part of the plan of salvation by Christ, to *sanctify* men as well as to *justify* them.

But *how* does the blood of Christ cleanse the soul from its inherent depravity? This is a question which must

appear deeply interesting to all who know any thing of the evil of indwelling sin, and who groan, being burdened under the weight of its grievous corruption.

It is the immediate and appropriate office of the Holy Spirit to sanctify the soul. "It is the Spirit that quickeneth." John, 6: 63. Hence the promise of Jehovah to the objects of his saving mercy—"Behold, I will sprinkle clean water upon you; from all your filthiness, and from all your idols will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments and do them." Ezekiel, 36: 25-27. In short, for the commencement of holiness in the heart in regeneration, and for every progressive attainment made in conformity to the will of God, "in crucifying the flesh, with the affections and lusts," we are indebted to the Holy Spirit of God.

But it is only in virtue of the atoning sacrifice of Christ that the Holy Spirit of sanctification is given. This is one of the great benefits which the Redeemer died to purchase for his people. Had he not suffered and died, the Holy Spirit had never been given to enlighten and purify his disciples. "If I go not away," said he, "the Comforter will not come unto you." John, 16: 7. Not only so, but one great purpose for which the Savior became incarnate, was that "he might sanctify his people with his own blood." Accordingly we are told, "He loved the church, and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word; that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish." Eph. 5: 25-27. And again, "He gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." Titus, 2: 14. We may say, then, that the sanctification of his people

is as much a part of the purchase of a Savior's blood, as any of the benefits which they receive. In laying down his life, he left no uncertainty in respect to the salvation of believers; but "through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth," secured as firmly their deliverance from the dominion and pollution of sin, as from its condemnation; and ensured to every child of God conformity to his image, and preparation for the society and employments of a holy heaven.

We may add, that the blood of Christ cleanseth from the power and pollution of sin, in that believing views of his atoning blood have a direct and powerful tendency to promote our sanctification. In proportion as the mind of man believably contemplates, and practically embraces "the truth as it is in Jesus," and especially that great cardinal truth, in which all the lines of revelation meet,—that Jesus Christ laid down his life to save sinners, and that his blood cleanseth from all sin,—will the power of sin be broken in him, and he conformed to the great design of the Savior's death. Nothing is more adapted to humble, soften and purify the soul, than believing views of the adorable Redeemer—his eternal and matchless love—his wonderful sufferings and death—and the rich benefits which flow from his atoning blood. A lively faith in these amazing objects presents such views of the divine character and law—such apprehensions of the astonishing love of Christ—such motives to obedience—and such a constraining power over the whole man, as are adapted, more than any or all other considerations, to abase pride, to convince of sin, to melt the heart in penitential sorrow, to bind it to the Redeemer in sacred confidence and love, and to impel to habitual holiness of heart and of life.

Thus complete is the deliverance from all sin by the blood of Jesus Christ. Thus does it take away the condemning power of sin; the dominion of sin; the love of sin; the pollution of sin; and, in due time, all its remaining existence

from the heart. Happy, thrice happy is he on whom these benefits are bestowed! Well may the inspired Psalmist pronounce—"Blessed is the man whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered; unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile."

But let it ever be remembered that this blessedness belongs to none but true believers;—to none but those who "believe with the heart unto righteousness; that is, who receive and rest on the Savior, with humility, gratitude and love, as their hope and life. The blood of the paschal lamb did not avail excepting to those on whose door-posts it was *sprinkled*. Neither will the blood of Jesus Christ avail to the cleansing of any but those to whom it is spiritually *applied*. However complete the atoning sacrifice of the Redeemer, we are assured it will benefit only those who cordially and gratefully receive it. However rich and all-cleansing the efficacy of his blood, those only will have their sins washed away in this precious fountain, who repair to it by faith, and renounce all hope of cleansing and saving themselves. "He that believeth," said the Lord of glory, "shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned." Mark, 16: 16. Again he declared—"If ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins." John, 8: 24. And again, "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him." John, 3: 36. Yes notwithstanding all that the divine Redeemer has done and suffered, those who reject or disregard his merciful offer, must go down to the prison of eternal despair, with all their sins unpardoned, with all their depravity unbroken; under the power of that "fleshly mind" which is enmity against God, and under the weight of that wrath which will consign them to "everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power." 2 Thess. 1: 9.

Beloved reader! what think you of these things? Be assured that what has been said is no idle speculation,

It is truth of everlasting importance. It is your life. You are a sinner. You cannot deny the charge. You need forgiveness and sanctification. You must inevitably perish unless you obtain both. You can never obtain those blessings but "through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus;" and you can have no interest in that redemption without feeling your need of it, and cordially receiving it as the ground of your hope, and the life of your soul. Have you, then, received Christ, and are you resting in him? Have you good evidence that you have been pardoned through the atoning blood, and renewed by the Spirit of the Lord Jesus? Or does your conscience bear witness that you are "yet in your sins," and of course have no part nor lot in the salvation of the Gospel? O reader! these are questions in comparison with which all others are trifling.

Many hearers of the Gospel are daily busying themselves in vain speculations concerning the *origin of evil*, and the *philosophy of our depravity*; while the melancholy *fact*, and the proffered *deliverance from it*, occupy but little of their attention. O when will infatuated mortals be persuaded to renounce this folly, and to "consider their ways?" Impenitent reader! while you speculate and cavil, you perish! Behold, through Christ, is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins. "He that cometh to him shall in no wise be cast out." He is "able to save even unto the uttermost all that come unto God by him." Hebrews, 7: 25. Let no sinner then, either willfully or carelessly neglect to embrace the offer of mercy so freely and graciously made. If any are excluded from the cleansing power of the Savior's blood, it will be because they exclude themselves. Yes, fellow mortal, if you perish, it will not be on account of any insufficiency in the blood of Christ to make you clean; but solely because of your voluntary and unbelieving rejection of a proffered deliverance, the most effectual, blessed, and glorious that was ever presented to a creature's acceptance.

Nor let the awakened, anxious sinner, who has been

made in some measure to see the number and aggravation of his sins, indulge the fear that his sins are too great to be washed away even by a Savior's blood. Were it the blood of a mere man, or of a mere exalted creature, O sinner, to which we direct your attention and your confidence, you might well despair. But it is the blood of Him who was truly God, as well as truly man, in the same mysterious Person. It is no extravagance to say, that it is the blood of an *infinite sacrifice*. "Wherefore He is able to save to the *uttermost* all that come unto God by him." Heb. 7 : 25. Blessed be his holy name for that precious word, the *uttermost*. It covers the worst cases. It extends to every possible degree of guilt. Though your sins were the blackest that ever disgraced the annals of rebellion, yet, if you humbly apply to this blood of atonement; if you come with faith and penitence to this "fountain opened for sin and uncleanness," you will not be rejected. Has the Savior pledged his almightiness as well as his love? Has he said, 'Look unto me, and be ye saved, all ye ends of the earth, for I am Jehovah, and there is none else;' (Isa. 45 : 22.) and can you still doubt whether he is *able* as well as *will ing* to save all that come unto God through him?

Let those who have already taken refuge in the Savior, and who desire more and more to be cleansed from sin, remember whither they are to go for the attainment of this blessing. Yes, believer, if you wish daily to mortify corruption, to overcome the world, and to grow in grace—be much employed every day in believing contemplations of Christ,—his redeeming love,—his atoning sacrifice,—his cleansing blood,—his holy example, and the holy joys of his presence. Meditate much on these objects, and you will be able to say, with the apostle—"I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me." Gal. 2 : 20.

THE END.