

Free Grace Broadcaster

ISSUE 264

PRECIOUS BLOOD

The precious blood of Christ.

1 Peter 1:19

Our Purpose

*“To humble the pride of man,
to exalt the grace of God in salvation,
and to promote real holiness in heart and life.”*

Free Grace Broadcaster

PRECIOUS BLOOD

264

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THE PRECIOUS BLOOD OF CHRIST

Octavius Winslow (1808-1878)

The precious blood of Christ.—1 Peter 1:19

THE Word of God is the only book that conveys to us a correct idea of the sanctity and meaning of blood. The instructions of God as to its nature and use in the Levitical economy¹ present the spectacle to the mind invested with an impressiveness dreadful² in its character and profound in its meaning. In God's eye, blood was a sacred thing. The solemnity with which He regarded [it] and the vigilance with which He shielded it are remarkably striking. We marvel not at this. By the instrument of blood, Jehovah was to unfold His divine character, illustrate His moral government, and achieve His miracle of mercy in behalf of fallen man, in a way so wonderful and resplendent³ as the intelligent universe had never beheld. That one thing—BLOOD—was to fill the world with His glory, heaven with His redeemed, and eternity with His praise! Hence the sacredness and value of blood in God's view...

What an impressive spectacle would meet the eye of the devout Israelite as he entered the temple to worship! He would see blood upon the altar, blood upon the sides of the altar, blood in the bowls of the altar, blood flowing around the altar; and in that blood, so profusely shed and minutely applied, his penitent⁴ heart would confront the truth: "Without shedding of blood there is no remission⁵" (Heb 9:22); and his believing eye would behold the "precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot" (1Pe 1:19); "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world" (Rev 13:8).

Such is the vital truth that is now to engage our thoughts. Among all the precious things of God, there is not one so precious, so inestimable, so influential, as the "precious blood of Christ." All salvation, all purity, all peace, all holiness, all hope, all heaven is bound up in the atoning blood of Immanuel. There is no acceptance for the sinner, no cleansing for the guilty, no pardon for the penitent, no sanctification

¹ **Levitical economy** – time of the Old Covenant under the Levitical priests.

² **dreadful** – inspiring reverence; awe-inspiring.

³ **resplendent** – having great beauty and splendor.

⁴ **penitent** – feeling regret for one's sins with serious purpose to amend the wrongdoing.

⁵ **remission** – forgiveness; pardon of sin.

for the believer, but in the [substitutionary] sacrifice of the Son of God. With nothing are honesty and tenderness of conscience, soul-prosperity, the power of prayer, purity of heart, holiness of life, related, so closely entwined, as the “precious blood of Christ.”

It becomes, then, of the greatest moment that we should have scriptural, spiritual, realizing views of this great truth. The point at which we are liable to come short is, not so much our depreciatory⁶ views of the essential worth of atoning blood as of the necessity of the application of it to the conscience. How few there are of the Lord’s people who are walking with the blood upon the conscience! “For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep” (1Co 11:30). We detect this deficiency and defect in the experimental⁷ religion of many, by the absence of a wakeful conscience, of deep spirituality of mind, of minute confession of sin, of closeness of walk, and a Christ-like temper and spirit. Nor this alone. To what may we trace the doubt and uncertainty as to their personal salvation, the lack of assured peace, joy, and communion with God, which imparts a sickly hue to the Christianity of so many, which dims their light, impairs their vigor, and makes them so easy a prey to Satan’s assaults and the world’s seductions, but to the absence of close dealing with the atoning blood? The application of blood was a truth distinctly seen, even amid the dim twilight shadows of the Levitical and prophetic dispensations.⁸ The blood of the sacrifice was of no avail until it was applied, brought into contact with the object. That object then—whether a person or a thing—became relatively holy. Touched by the sacrificial blood it was regarded as sanctified—as set apart for the holy Lord God; but until the blood was applied it was a common thing. How glorious the gospel of this! The believing soul must come in contact with the atoning blood of Christ; and in order to maintain holiness and closeness of walk with God—the essence of true religion—and to pass through life’s duties, trials, and temptations as a royal priest, realizing our high calling of God, there must be the constant application of the blood of Christ.

From *The Precious Things of God* (New York: Robert Carter & Brothers, 1867), 160-163, in the public domain.

Octavius Winslow (1808-1878): Baptist pastor and prolific author; later an Anglican priest; born in Pentonville, England, UK.



⁶ **depreciatory** – undervaluing, disrespectful.

⁷ **experimental** – personal experience of walking with Christ by faith; experiential.

⁸ **dispensations** – acts of God’s divine ordering and arrangement of events.

THE COVENANT OF REDEMPTION AND CHRIST'S BLOOD

Thomas Brooks (1608-1680)

WE may present [that compact,¹ covenant, and agreement that was solemnly made between God and Christ, touching the whole business of man's salvation or redemption] to our understanding in this form: God the Father saith to Christ the mediator,² "I look upon Adam and his posterity as a degenerate seed, a 'generation of vipers' (Mat 3:7), of apostates and backsliders, yea, traitors and rebels, liable to all temporal, spiritual, and eternal judgments; yet I cannot find in My heart to damn them all. 'Mine heart is turned within me, my repentings are kindled together. I will not execute the fierceness of mine anger...for I am God, and not man' (Hos 11:8-9); and therefore, I have determined to show mercy upon many millions of them and save them from wrath to come and to bring them to glory (Rev 7:9-10); but this I must do with a salvo³ to My law, justice, and honor. If, therefore, Thou wilt undertake for them and become a curse for their sakes (Gal 3:10, 13), and so make satisfaction⁴ to My justice for their sins, I will give them unto Thee (Joh 17:2, 6, 11) to take care of them and to bring them up to My kingdom for the manifestation of the glory of My grace." "Well," saith Christ, "I am content, I will do all Thou requirest with all My heart; and so the agreement is made between Thee and Me." This may be gathered from the scriptures in the [footnote].⁵ Christ the Son speaks in both places. In the first, He publisheth the decree or ordinance of heaven touching Himself and bringeth in the Father, installing [the Son] into the priesthood or office of mediator. For so the apostle applieth that text: "Thou art my Son," etc. (Heb 5:5) and avoucheth⁶ this covenant and agreement in the two main parts of it.

First, the condition that He will have performed on Christ's part as

¹ **compact** – contract made between two or more persons or parties.

² **mediator** – a go-between; one who intervenes between two hostile parties for the purpose of restoring them to a relationship of harmony and unity.

³ **salvo** – answer explaining how a difficulty has been resolved.

⁴ **satisfaction** – payment of a debt, that is, Christ's blood sacrifice satisfying the wrath of God against His people's violation of His Law.

⁵ Psa 2:7-9; 40:6-8.

⁶ **avoucheth** – affirms.

mediator, or what Christ must do as mediator: He must ask of God (Psa 2:8), that is, not only *verbally*, by prayers and supplications, beg mercy, pardon, righteousness, and salvation for poor lost sinners; but also *really* by fulfilling the righteousness of the law, both in doing and suffering, and so by satisfaction and merit, purchasing acceptation for them at His hands. The Father engaged so and so to Christ, and Christ reciprocally engaged so and so to the Father; a considerable part of the terms and matter of which covenant is set down: “When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed...” (Isa 53:10). The Father covenants to do thus and thus for fallen man; but first in order thereunto, the Son must covenant to take man’s nature, therein to satisfy offended justice, to repair and vindicate His Father’s honor, etc. Well, He submits, assents to these demands, indents,⁷ and covenants to make all good; and this was the substance of the covenant of redemption. But,

Secondly, let us consider the promise that the Father engageth to perform on His part. The Son must ask, and the Father will give. He will give Him the heathen for His inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for His possession (Psa 2:8). [This is] an allusion to great princes. When they would show great affection to their favorites, they bid them ask what they will, as Ahasuerus did, and as Herod did; that is, He shall both be the Lord’s salvation to the ends of the earth and have all power given Him in heaven and earth [so that] every knee shall bow to Him, and every tongue shall confess Him to be Lord (Mat 28:18; Phi 2:10-11). In the other text before mentioned (Psa 40), Christ declares His compliance to the agreement and His subscribing⁸ the covenant on His part when He came into the world, as the apostle explains it (Heb 10:5). “Mine ears,” saith He, “hast thou opened⁹...Lo, I come...to do thy will” (Psa 40:6), as if He had said, “O Father, Thou dost engage Me to be Thy servant in this great work of saving sinners. Lo, I come to do the work. I here covenant and agree to yield up Myself to Thy disposing and to serve Thee forever”...

But for a more clear, distinct, and full opening of the covenant of redemption, or that blessed compact between God the Father and Jesus Christ, which is a matter of grand importance to all our souls; and considering that it is a point that I have never yet treated of in pulpit or press, I shall therefore take the liberty at this time to open myself as

⁷ **indents** – enters into a formal agreement.

⁸ **subscribing** – giving one’s assent.

⁹ *Hebrew* = digged or pierced; digging becomes a metaphor for receiving and responding to the divine word.

clearly and as fully as I can. And therefore thus:

Question: If you ask me what this covenant of redemption is? I answer, in general, that a covenant is a mutual agreement between parties, upon articles or propositions on both sides, so that each party is tied and bound to perform his own conditions. This description holds the general nature of a covenant and is common to all covenants, public and private, divine or human. But secondly and more particularly, I answer [that] the covenant of redemption is that federal transaction¹⁰ or mutual stipulation¹¹ that was between God and Christ from everlasting for the accomplishment of the work of our redemption by the mediation of Jesus Christ to the eternal honor and unspeakable praise of the glorious grace of God. Or, if you please, take it in another form of words thus:

It is a compact, bargain, and agreement between God the Father and God the Son, the designed mediator, concerning the conversion, sanctification, and salvation of the elect through the death, satisfaction, and obedience of Jesus Christ, which in due time was to be given to the Father. But for the making good the definition I have laid down, I must take leave to tell you that there are many choice scriptures that give clear intimation of such a federal transaction between God the Father and Jesus Christ to the recovery and everlasting happiness and salvation of His elect...

That the Holy Spirit opens and expounds the covenant of redemption, bringing in the Father and the Son as conferring and agreeing together about the terms of it. The first thing agreed on between them is the *price*; and the price that God the Father stands¹² upon is blood—not the blood of bulls and goats, but the blood of His Son, which was the best, the purest, and the noblest blood that ever ran in veins. Now, Christ, to bring about the redemption of fallen man, is willing to come up to the demands of His Father and to lay down His blood. The scripture calls the blood of Christ “precious¹³ blood” (1Pe 1:19). Oh, the virtue in it, the value of it! Through this Red Sea we must pass to heaven. Christ’s blood is heaven’s key...Christ’s blood is “precious blood” in regard of the dignity of His person. It is the blood of God Himself (Act 20:28). It is the blood of that person Who is very God as well as very man. Christ’s blood was noble blood and therefore precious. He came

¹⁰ **federal transaction** – covenant arrangement between the Father and the Son that the Son would be the covenantal, representative head for all who believe on Him.

¹¹ **mutual stipulation** – agreement between two people to do something.

¹² **stands** – insists.

¹³ **precious** – of immense value, worth, or cost.

of the race of kings, as touching His manhood. But being withal¹⁴ the Son of God renders His nobility matchless and peerless. It was Pharaoh's brag that he was "the son of ancient kings" (Isa 19:11). Who can lay claim to this more than Christ? Who can challenge this honor before Him? He is the Son of the most ancient king in the world. He was begotten a king from all eternity (Dan 7:9, 13, 27); and the blood of good kings is precious. "Thou art worth ten thousand of us," said David's subjects to him (2Sa 18:3); and therefore, they would not suffer him to hazard himself in the battle. The nobleness of his person did set a high rate upon his blood. And whom doth this argument more commend unto us than Christ?

And the blood of Christ is precious blood in regard of the virtues of it. By this blood, God and man are reconciled. By this blood, the chosen of God are redeemed. It was an excellent saying of Leo:¹⁵ "The effusion of Christ's blood is so rich and available that if the whole multitude of captive sinners would believe in their Redeemer, not one of them should be detained in the tyrant's chains." This precious blood justifies our persons in the sight of God. It frees us from the guilt of sin, it frees us from the reign and dominion of sin, and it frees us from the punishments that are due to sin. It saves us "from the wrath to come" (1Th 1:10). Now, were not Christ's blood of infinite value and virtue, it could never have produced such glorious effects. The blood of Christ is precious beyond all account, and yet our Lord Jesus did not think it too dear a price to pay down for His saints. God the Father would be satisfied with no other price; and therefore, God the Son comes up to His Father's price that our redemption might be sure. But,

Observe that God rejects all ways of satisfaction by men. Could men make as many prayers as there be stars in heaven and drops in the sea, and could they weep as much blood as there is water in the ocean, and should they give all their goods to the poor and their bodies to be burned (1Co 13:3), as some have done, yet all this would not satisfy for the least sin, not for an idle word, not for a vain thought. "Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not" (Heb 10:5); that is, "Thou wilt not accept of them for an expiation¹⁶ and satisfaction for sin, as the Jews imagined." The apostle shows the impotency and insufficiency of legal sacrifices by God's rejecting of them. The things here set down not to be regarded by God—as sacrifices, offerings, burnt-offerings, and sacrifices for sin, together with other legal ordinances comprised under

¹⁴ **withal** – at the same time.

¹⁵ **Leo the Great** (c. 400-461) – bishop of Rome; *Leo de pas.*, sermon xii. c. 4.

¹⁶ **expiation** – removal or covering the guilt of sin.

them—do demonstrate that God regards none of those things in a way of satisfaction. They are no current price. They are no such pay that will be accepted in the court of heaven. Remission of sin could never be obtained by sacrifices and offerings, nor by prayers, tears, humblings, meltings, watchings, fastings, penances, pilgrimages, etc. Remission of sins cost Christ dear, though it cost us nothing. Remission of sins drops down from God to us through Christ's wounds and swims to us in Christ's blood. It was well said by one of the ancients: "Thus I do not have the wherewithal¹⁷ to enable me to glory in my own works, I do not have the wherewithal to boast of myself, and so I will glory in Christ. I will not glory because I have been redeemed. I will not glory because I am free of sins but because sins have been forgiven me. I will not glory because I am profitable or because anyone is profitable to me but because Christ is an advocate on my behalf with the Father, because the blood of Christ has been poured out on my behalf."¹⁸ Certainly the popish doctrine of man's own satisfaction in part for his sins is most derogatory¹⁹ to the blood and to the plenary²⁰ and complete satisfaction of Jesus Christ. But,

Thirdly, observe that *nothing below the obedience and sufferings of Christ our mediator could satisfy divine justice.* "But a body hast thou prepared me" (Heb 10:5)...Christ, having declared what His Father delighteth not in, further showeth affirmatively what it was wherein He rested well pleased in these words: "But a body hast thou prepared me." In this phrase, "A body hast thou prepared me," Christ is brought in, speaking to His Father. By body is meant the human nature of Christ. Body is synecdochally²¹ put for the whole human nature, consisting of body and soul; the body was the visible part of Christ's human nature. A body is fit for a sacrifice, fit to be slain, fit to have blood shed out of it, fit to be offered up, fit to be made a price and a ransom for our sins, and fit to answer the types²² under the law. Pertinently²³ therefore, to this purpose is it said of Christ: He himself "bare our sins in his own body" (1Pe 2:24); and those infirmities wherein He was "made like unto" us (Heb 2:9, 14, 17) were most conspicuously evidenced in His body;

¹⁷ **wherewithal** – means by which to do something.

¹⁸ Ambrose (ca. 340-397), *Of Jacob and the Happy Life*, quoted in Joel C. Elowsky and Thomas C. Oden, eds., *We Believe in the Holy Spirit*, Vol. 4, *Ancient Christian Doctrine* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2009), 96-97.

¹⁹ **derogatory** – having the effect of lowering honor; insulting.

²⁰ **plenary** – full.

²¹ **synecdochally** – using a figure of speech in which a part represents the whole.

²² **types/type** – something in the Old Testament that foreshadows or symbolizes someone or something in the New Testament.

²³ **pertinently** – appropriately; suitably to the purpose.

and hereby Christ was manifested to be a true man. He had a body like ours, a body subject to manifold infirmities, yes, to death itself. The body that Christ had is said to be “prepared by God”...God fitted His Son’s body to be joined with the deity and to be an expiatory sacrifice for sin. The word *prepared* implies that God the Father ordained, formed, and made fit and able Christ’s human nature to undergo, suffer, and fulfil that for which He was sent into the world. God the Father is here said to have prepared Christ a body because Christ, having received of His Father the human nature out of the flesh and blood of the Virgin Mary by the power of the Holy Ghost (Mat 1:20; Luk 1:31, 35), here gives up the same unto the service of His Father, to do, to suffer, to die, that He might be a sacrifice of expiation for our sins...

Now saith God, “I have made a covenant with” Him (Psa 89:3). So then, there is a covenant that God the Father hath made with Christ the mediator. [This] covenant, the Father engages²⁴ to the Son, shall stand fast. There shall be no cancelling or disannulling of it. God the Father hath not only made a covenant of grace with the saints in Christ...but He has also made a covenant of redemption, as we call it for distinction’s sake, with Jesus Christ Himself: “My covenant shall stand fast with him” (Psa 89:28), that is, with Christ, as we have fully and clearly demonstrated. But,

[In] Zechariah 9:11, “As for thee also, by the blood of thy covenant,” or Whose covenant is by blood, “I have sent forth thy prisoners out of the pit wherein is no water.” Here God the Father speaks to Christ with relation to some covenant between them both; and what covenant can that be but the covenant of redemption? All the temporal, spiritual, and eternal deliverances that we enjoy swim to us through the blood of that covenant that is passed between the Father and the Son. By virtue of the same blood of the covenant, wherewith we are reconciled, justified, and saved, were the Jews delivered from their Babylonish captivity. The Babylonish captivity, thrall²⁵dom, and dispersion was that waterless pit, that dirty dungeon, that uncomfortable and forlorn condition, out of which they were delivered by virtue of the blood of the covenant, that is, by virtue of the blood of Christ, figured by the blood that was sprinkled upon the people, and by virtue of the covenant confirmed thereby (Exo 24:8; Psa 74:20; Heb 13:20). Look—as all the choice mercies, the high favors, the noble blessings that the saints enjoy are purchased by the blood of Christ, so they are made sure to the saints by the same blood,

²⁴ **engages** – promises.

²⁵ **thrall²⁵dom** – slavery; bondage.

by the blood of Thy covenant. "I have sent forth thy prisoners" (Zec 9:11). Whatever desperate distresses and deadly dangers the people of God may fall into, yet they are "prisoners of hope" (Zec 9:12) and may look for deliverance by the blood of the covenant.

It is most clear and evident that there was a covenant, a compact, and [an] agreement between God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ concerning the work of our redemption. Christ's being called "a surety²⁶ of a better testament" (Heb 7:21) shows that there was a covenant between God the Father and Him, as there is between a creditor and a surety. Christ gave bonds, as it were, to God the Father, and paid down the debt upon the nail,²⁷ that breaches might be made up between God and us, restoring us to divine favor forever. But for the further clearing up of the covenant of redemption, I shall, in the second place, lay down these propositions. And,

The first is this: *That the covenant of redemption differs from the covenant of grace.* It is true [that] the covenant of redemption is a covenant of grace, but it is not properly that covenant of grace which the Scripture holds out in opposition to the covenant of works, which I shall thus evidence:

[1] The covenant of redemption differs from the covenant of grace regarding the federates. In the covenant of redemption, it is God the Father and Jesus Christ that mutually covenant; but in the covenant of grace the confederates²⁸ are God and believers.

[2] In the covenant of redemption, God the Father requires of Jesus Christ that He should suffer, shed His blood, die, and make Himself an offering for our sins. In the covenant of grace, God requires of us that we should believe and embrace the Lord Jesus.

[3] In the covenant of redemption, God the Father has made many great, precious, and glorious promises to Jesus Christ. As, "Sit on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool" (Heb 1:13); and, "He shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand" (Isa 53:10); and, "Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession" (Psa 2:8); and, "I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son" (Heb 1:5). But in the covenant of grace, God promises grace and glory to us, holiness and happiness, both

²⁶ **surety** – one who undertakes the debt of another; as our Surety, Christ guaranteed a full legal satisfaction for our sin upon His payment of our debt upon Calvary's cross.

²⁷ **upon the nail** – exactly.

²⁸ **confederates** – ones who are united with others in a compact or league.

the upper and the lower springs (Psa 84:11; Eze 36:26-27).

[4] The covenant of redemption between God and Christ secures the covenant of grace between God and believers; for what God promises to us, He promised to Jesus Christ before the foundation of the world (Ti 1:2)! Therefore, if God the Father should not make good His promises to His saints, He would not make good His promises to His dearest Son, which for any to imagine would be high blasphemy. God will be sure to keep touch²⁹ with Jesus Christ; and therefore, we may rest fully assured that He will not fail to keep touch with us.

[5] The covenant of redemption is the very basis or bottom³⁰ of the covenant of grace. God made a covenant with Christ, the spiritual David, that He might make a covenant with all His elect in Him (Psa 89:3-4; Rom 11:26-27). He made this agreement with Christ as the head, and on this is reared up the whole frame of precious promises comprised in the covenant of grace, as a goodly building upon a sure foundation.

From *The Complete Works of Thomas Brooks*, ed. Alexander Balloch Grosart, vol. 5 (Edinburgh; London; Dublin: James Nichol; James Nisbet and Co.; G. Herbert, 1867), 330-31; 344-347; 349-351; in the public domain.

Thomas Brooks (1608-1680): English Nonconformist Puritan preacher and advocate of Congregationalism; buried in Bunhill Fields.



To those who are [yet] to be set free, I have to say this. By nature, you are in the state that I have been describing, though perhaps you are hardly aware of it. *You are prisoners in the pit without water.* If unrenewed in heart, you are in a state of alienation from God and of spiritual danger, destitution, and misery. But, dear souls, though this is the case with all of you who have not been born again, there is this cheering truth: though you are prisoners, you are “*prisoners of hope.*” Wherever the gospel is preached, there is hope for sinners; and whoever hears it may take heart of hope. I am not now speaking merely about outwardly moral people, but I am speaking of any who have...sinned grossly—drunkards, swearers, harlots, the very worst and lowest of persons. You are prisoners to your sins, but you are prisoners of hope, for you are within reach of One Who sets free from sin! The Lord Jesus Christ, Whom we preach to you, saves His people from their sins; and I pray that He may come to you in all the plenitude of His liberating power and set you free from your sins this very hour.—*Charles Spurgeon*

By faith, behold Christ, now in the heavenly sanctuary, as your righteousness, life, and strength. See in God’s acceptance of Him, His adoption of you, that you have been reconciled to Him, made nigh by the precious blood. In the realization of this, worship in spirit and in truth.

—*A. W. Pink*

²⁹ **keep touch** – carefully perform His agreement.

³⁰ **bottom** – foundation.

THE BLOOD OF THE GREAT HIGH PRIEST

Octavius Winslow (1808-1878)

THERE is another view of our subject that illustrates the endearing¹ character of Christ's blood. It is not only precious to God, but it is also precious in the experience of the believer. God will make that precious to His people which is precious to Himself. He will endear² to their hearts that which is dear to His own. It is precious to the saints because it is the blood of their Great High Priest. There was no personal relation between the sacrifice and the priest under the Levitical dispensation. But here the antitype³ transcends the type.⁴ We see in the blood of Christ the blood of one who stands to us in the varied and tender relations of a Priest, a Shepherd, a Friend, a Brother, a Kinsman, a Redeemer. Oh, to travel to the cross and behold in that illustrious Sufferer One Who combined in Himself every endearing, tender, and precious relation! It was no stranger who hung there. It was no wayfaring⁵ man of grief who died there. It was our Elder Brother, our Goel,⁶ our Friend. How precious, then, to our penitent, believing, loving hearts must that blood be! With what reverence should we speak of it, with what faith should we trust in it, with what gratitude should we welcome it, and with what holiness of life should we show forth its praise!

As all His salvation, it must possess an indescribable preciousness to the believer. There is no salvation for the soul but in the atoning blood of Immanuel. Whatever else presents itself as such is a delusion and a snare. Baptism is nothing here. Sacraments are nothing here. Priestly power is nothing here. Works of human merit are nothing here. The blood of Christ—God's own expedient—stands unrivaled and alone,

¹ **endearing** – inspiring love or affection.

² **endear** – make dear; create affection for.

³ **antitype** – person or thing (antitype) that is foreshadowed or represented by a type or symbol, especially a character or event in the New Testament prefigured in the Old Testament.

⁴ **antitype transcends the type** – Christ Jesus (the antitype) is vastly superior to the Levitical priesthood (the type).

⁵ **wayfaring** – travelling, especially on foot.

⁶ **Goel** – kinsman-redeemer, which is a type of Christ: someone who was near of kin, able to redeem, and willing to redeem.

the only hope of a lost sinner. The teaching and authority of God's Word are decisive and ultimate on this momentous and vital point.

Christ's sacrifice is declared to be "a propitiation through faith in his blood" (Rom 3:25); "being now justified by his blood" (Rom 5:9); "we have redemption through his blood" (Eph 1:7); "that he might sanctify the people with his own blood" (Heb 13:12); "him that... washed us from our sins in his own blood" (Rev 1:5); "These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God" (Rev 7:14). In these declarations the great essential truth is inscribed: SALVATION ALONE BY THE ATONING BLOOD OF CHRIST. This is the "Stone" that is set at nothing by all who seek some other way to heaven—who build their hope upon the sand—a way the end of which is death. But "neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (Act 4:12). Before the power and glory of this one precious name, every false religion shall vanish, and to [this name] every knee shall bow.

Around a dying bed, the scaffolding of all ecclesiastical systems falls, leaving the man who has reposed his all upon it to his ghostly hope. But to that departing soul, to whom the savor, power, and preciousness of the name of JESUS is as ointment shedding its fragrance round the room where disease and death with united force are battling with life—oh, how supporting, soothing, and hope-inspiring is the precious blood of Christ that is felt at that dreadful moment, when the transgressions of a life crowd upon memory, to "cleanse from ALL sin!" The peace that flows from the application of the atoning blood of Christ increases greatly the believer's sense of its preciousness. Who can describe the repose⁷ of conscience, the mental serenity, the heart-ease that this blood seals upon the believing soul? It must be experienced to be understood.

Beloved, as your eye traces this page, there may rage within your breast, unknown and unsuspected by others, the storm of sin's conviction. So sunlit and serene is, perhaps, the surface, [that] not a shadow or a wavelet⁸ betrays the hidden and deep emotion. And yet you feel yourself a sinner—a lost sinner—the chief of sinners. You are filled with sin-loathing, self-abhorrence, sorrow, and grief. A deep conviction of your utter vileness, unworthiness, and hell-deserving is the cause. And what is the remedy? *The precious blood of Christ!* Brought beneath

⁷ **repose** – state of quiet restfulness; peace or tranquility.

⁸ **wavelet** – small wave.

that blood, as like a crimson tide it flows from the cross, peace, perfect peace, the peace of God that passes all understanding will flow into your soul, and there shall be a great calm. And then will you joyously exclaim, “I am at peace with God through Christ. The tempest is hushed; the thundercloud has passed away; the Sun of Righteousness pours its golden beams into my soul, and heaven and earth seem to meet and kiss each other.”

The present efficacy⁹ of the atoning blood must form an endearing element to the heart whose pantings and breathings are for purity. This will need no argument to those of my readers who are used to keeping a vigilant oversight of the spiritual state of their souls. You will feel, beloved, that you cannot close your day, in which, despite the greatest watchfulness and prayer, there will be found in things done or in things undone much to produce contrition¹⁰ and humility, without a fresh application to the Fountain.

The atoning blood of Jesus *is* of present efficacy. This, one of its essential elements, is much overlooked. Many of the Lord’s people postpone an immediate confession of sin and application to the blood. The effect is to produce [a seared] conscience and a kind of moral ossification¹¹ of the heart [that is] most injurious to personal holiness. The conscience thus losing its tenderness and the heart its sensibility, sin comes to be seen in a light less abhorrent, sanctification less sought, and Christ less endeared. Remembering, then, that it is an open and a flowing Fountain—that no sin, no backsliding, however great and aggravated, dare interdict¹² or intercept your approach—repair¹³ immediately in faith to the blood, wash, and be clean.

The atoning blood of Immanuel is the divine bath of the soul... That atoning blood is the divine laver¹⁴ of the believer. The existence of a fretting leprosy¹⁵ within, and the hourly contact with a raging plague without, necessitates perpetual soul-ablution. Let it not be supposed that we are advocating a habit calculated to impress the mind with light thoughts of sin, or to make Christ its minister. Far from this will be the effect of a constant and conscientious dealing with Christ’s atonement—of frequent bathing in the blood.

⁹ **efficacy** – effectiveness.

¹⁰ **contrition** – sorrow for sin arising from the fear of damnation.

¹¹ **ossification** – process of becoming hardened or inflexible in attitude.

¹² **interdict** – prohibit.

¹³ **repair** – habitually go to.

¹⁴ **laver** – process of washing.

¹⁵ **fretting leprosy** – rapidly spreading skin disease.

The blood of Christ is sanctifying,¹⁶ as well as purifying. It not only effaces the immediate stain of guilt, but it intensifies the heart's thirst for holiness. No believer can cultivate an intimate acquaintance with Christ or bathe frequently in the fountain of His blood and not experience a growing sanctification.¹⁷ It is the blood of a holy sacrifice, and it leaves the traces of holiness wherever it flows. And when he comes afresh and closely to the "blood of sprinkling," and again goes forth to the Christian conflict, it is to fight more successfully, to walk more circumspectly,¹⁸ and to yield himself more unreservedly unto God. How clearly and forcibly does the apostle put this truth—the sanctifying influence of the blood. "Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, Make you perfect in every good work to do his will" (Heb 13:20-21). Let it not, then, be supposed, that in pleading for frequent application of the Savior's sacrifice, a constant cleansing from sin, we advocate a lax, careless walk. We believe that the heart is only thoroughly examined, sin is only deeply known, principles, motives, and aims are only closely sifted, analyzed, and seen by the power of the atoning blood of Christ. The blood not only cleanses, but it searches; it not only purifies, but it probes. Its influence is powerful and penetrating, imparting a keen perception of sin where its existence and taint¹⁹ were not seen or suspected...Keep your heart, O believer, much beneath the cross, your conscience in frequent and close contact with the blood, and the slightest touch of sin will make you restless and unhappy until you have confessed, and God has forgiven. This is the secret—which, alas! few see or care to know—of preserving the garments white amid pollution, the mind serene amid turmoil, the heart happy amid sorrow, the life radiant and transparent as the sun, and the spirit, temper, and carriage Christ-loving, and Christ-like. Oh, the wonders of the precious blood of Christ!

From *The Precious Things of God* (New York: Robert Carter & Brothers, 1867), 170-178, in the public domain.



The Christian's bath is the bath royal, the precious blood of the King of all the world. This only can make us pure.—*Thomas Adams*

¹⁶ **is sanctifying** – sets apart as holy or sacred.

¹⁷ **sanctification** – Sanctification is the work of God's Spirit whereby we are renewed in the whole man after the image of God and are enabled more and more to die to sin and live to righteousness. (*Spurgeon's Catechism*, Q. 34) See Free Grace Broadcaster 215, *Sanctification*, available from CHAPEL LIBRARY.

¹⁸ **circumspectly** – cautiously; carefully.

¹⁹ **taint** – contamination.

THE CLEANSING POWER OF CHRIST'S BLOOD

Stephen Charnock (1628-1680)

The blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanseth us from all sin.—1 John 1:7

THE apostle, in the beginning of the chapter, puts the saints to whom he writes in mind of the Gospel he had written. [In it] he had declared to them that Word of life, which had been with the Father and was manifested to the world, and which he now declares again that they might have fellowship with the apostles in the truth and not with the false teachers in their errors. For an incentive, [he] assures them that the fellowship of those that kept the truth as it is in Jesus was with the Father and with the Son. “That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son, Jesus Christ” (1Jo 1:3); with the Father, as the source and spring of eternal life and happiness; with the Son, as Mediator, Who has opened the way to us, removed the bars, and given us an access to and a communion with the Father. For by sin, we were alienated from God. Our sin had caused justice to lock up the gates of paradise and forbid such guilty and polluted offenders to approach to the pure majesty of God. The apostle, to encourage them to cleave to the gospel, proposes to them a fellowship with God by the means of Jesus Christ, His Son and our Mediator, as the chief happiness and felicity of man, and that which can only afford them a full and complete joy.

Afterwards, [in] verse 5, “This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him there is no darkness at all,” he prescribes to them the means whereby they may keep up a communion with God. [This] he infers from the transcendent excellency of the divine nature, Who is light—light, in regard of the clearness of His knowledge; light, in regard of His unstained purity, not tainted with the least spot or dust of evil, not having anything unworthy in His nature, nor doing anything unbecoming in His actions. If, therefore, our conversations be in darkness, if we wallow in the mire of any untamed, unmortified lust, whatsoever our evangelical professions may be, or howsoever we may fancy ourselves entered a fellowship with the Father by the means of the mediator, it is but a lying

imagination! For how can there be a communion between two natures so different—between light and darkness, purity and impurity, heaven and hell, God and the devil? But if our conversation be agreeable to gospel precepts, we have then a fellowship with Him. “If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another” (1Jo 1:7), i.e., God has a fellowship with us in affection and delight, and we have a fellowship with God in salvation and happiness. God gives Himself to us, and we give ourselves to God. He bestows grace and pardon on us, and we resign our hearts and affections to Him. And this is a certain proof that we are interested in the expiatory¹ virtue² of the blood of Christ...

Since God is infinitely pure light without darkness and we have so much darkness mixed with our best light, we must forever despair of having any fellowship with God. The infinite distance by reason of our indwelling corruption will put us out of all hopes of ever attaining such a sovereign felicity. But this reply is prevented³ by this clause of the apostle: “And the blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanseth us from all sin.”

Let not the sense of your daily infirmities animate any desponding fears. If you square your hearts and lives in all sincerity according to the gospel rule, there is a provision made for your security in the blood of Christ. God will wipe off the guilt of your defects by the virtue of the precious blood that has been shed for your reparation.⁴ The apostle here supposes remainders of sin in those that have the privilege of walking with God and interest in the blessings of the covenant.

The blood of Jesus Christ. By this is meant the last act in the tragedy of His life, His blood being the ransom of our souls, the price of our redemption, and the expiation of our sin. The shedding of His blood was the highest and most excellent part of His obedience (Phi 2:8). His whole life was a continual suffering, but His death was the top and complement of His obedience; for in that, He manifested the greatest love to God and the highest charity to man. The expiatory sacrifices under the law were always bloody; death was to be endured for sin, and blood was the life of the creature. The blood or death of Christ is the cause of our justification.

His Son. His sonship makes His blood valuable. It is blood, and so agreeable to the law in the penalty; it is the blood of the Son of God,

¹ **expiatory** – capable of making satisfaction for offense.

² **virtue** – power.

³ **prevented** – anticipated.

⁴ **reparation** – spiritual restoration; salvation.

and therefore acceptable to the lawgiver in its value. Though it was the blood of [His] humanity, yet the merit of it was derived from [His] divinity. It is not His blood as He was the son of the virgin, but His blood as He was the Son of God, which had this sovereign virtue. Therefore, it is no wonder that it should have such a mighty efficacy to cleanse believers from such vast heaps of guilt in all ages of the world...It is the blood of Christ, Who was God. [It is] valuable, not so much for the greatness of the punishment whereby it was shed, as the dignity of the person from Whom it flowed. One Son of God weighs more than millions of worlds of angels.

Cleanseth. *Cleansing* and *purging* are terms used in Scripture for justifying as well as sanctifying. The apostle interprets washing of both those acts: "But you are washed, but you are sanctified, but you are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God" (1Co 6:11). The latter words are exegetical⁵ of the former; they both are the fruits of the merit of the blood of Christ. The one is the act of the Father as a judge appeased⁶ by that blood, the other the act of the Spirit as a sanctifier purchased by that blood. And so, the "washing of us in the blood of Christ," spoken of in Revelation 1:5, is to be understood of justification. Sanctification is expressed by "making us kings and priests to God" (Rev 1:6), giving us royal and holy natures to offer up spiritual sacrifices unto God. Several times the word *chafar*, which signifies to expiate, appease, is translated to sanctify (Exo 29:33, 36) and to cleanse (29:37); and a word that signifies cleansing is sometimes put for justifying, as in the Third Commandment: "The LORD will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain" (Exo 20:7); [guiltless means] will not cleanse or purge them. But it must be understood of cleansing from guilt because it refers to the penalty of the law. It is here used in this sense; it is spoken to them that are sanctified and have a fellowship with God that if they walk in the light, God will impute to them the blood of His Son for their absolution from the guilt of all their infirmities.

The blood of Christ cleanseth.

1. *It hath a virtue to cleanse.* It doth not actually cleanse all [people], but only those that believe...There is a sufficiency in it to cleanse all, and there is an efficacy in it to cleanse those that have recourse to it.

2. *The blood of Christ cleanseth, not hath cleansed or shall cleanse.* This notes a continued act. There is a perpetual pleading of it for us, a

⁵ **exegetical** – referring to the explanation or interpretation.

⁶ **appeased** – satisfied.

continual flowing of it to us. It is a “fountain set open for sin” (Zec 13:1). There is a constant streaming of virtue from this blood, as there is corruption from our nature. It was shed but once, it is applied often, and the virtue of it is as durable as the person Whose blood it is.

3. *The blood of Christ cleanseth.* The apostle joins nothing with this blood. It hath the sole and the sovereign virtue. There is no need for tainted merits, unbloody sacrifices, and terrifying purgatories. The whole of cleansing is ascribed to this blood, not anything to our own righteousness or works. It admits no partner with it, not the blood of martyrs nor the intercessions of saints.

4. *The blood of Christ cleanseth us from all sin.* It is a universal remedy. Whatsoever hath the nature of sin, sins against the law and sins against the gospel. It absolves⁷ from the guilt of sin and shelters from the wrath of God. The distinction of venial⁸ and mortal sins hath no footing here; no sin but is mortal without it, no sin so venial but needs it. This blood purgeth not some sort of sins and leaves the rest to be expiated by a purgatory fire. This expression of the apostle, of *all sin*, is water enough to quench all the flames of purgatory that Rome hath kindled; what sins are not expiated by it are left not to a temporary, but an eternal death; not to a refining, but a consuming fire. So that we see these words are an antidote against fears arising by reason of our infirmities, a cordial against faintings, an encouragement to a holy walk with God. It is a short but a full panegyric⁹ of the virtue of the blood of Christ.

(1) In regard of the effect: *cleansing*. (2) In regard of the cause of its efficacy: It is the blood of *Jesus*, a savior; the blood of *Christ*, one appointed, anointed by God to be *Jesus*; the blood of the *Son of God*, of one in a special relation to the Father, as His only begotten, beloved Son. (3) In regard of the extensiveness of it: *all sin*. No guilt [is] so high but it can master [it]; no stain [is] so deep but it can purge [it]; being the blood of the Son of God, and therefore of infinite virtue, it has as much force to demolish mountains of guilt as level mole-hills of iniquity.

The words are a plain doctrine in themselves:

Doctrine. The blood of Christ has a perpetual virtue and does actually and perfectly cleanse believers from all guilt. This blood is the expiation of our sin and the unlocking of our chains, the price of our

⁷ **absolves** – pronounces free.

⁸ **venial and mortal sins** – Roman Catholic distinction made concerning types of sin: mortal being greater, venial being lesser. The biblical doctrine is that, while there may be degrees in the guilt and consequences of sin, the least sin deserves death (Rom 6:23) and the only remedy is the righteousness of Christ (Rom 4:1-8).

⁹ **panegyric** – high praise.

liberty and of the purity of our souls. The redemption we have through it is expressly called *the forgiveness of sin*. “In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sin” (Eph 1:7), by a metonymy¹⁰ of the effect for the cause; remission was an act of redemption. When the apostle tells that “by one offering he has for ever perfected them that are sanctified” (Heb 10:14), he places this perfection in the remission of sin (vv. 17-18). He did in the offering Himself so transact our affairs and settle our concerns with God that there was no need of any other offerings to eke it out or patch it up. As the blood of the typical sacrifices purified from ceremonial, so the blood of the antitypical offering purifies from moral uncleanness. Scripture places remission wholly in this blood of the Redeemer. When Christ makes His will and institutes His Supper, He commends this as our righteousness: “This is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins” (Mat 26:28), according to the title and end given it in the prophet: “By the blood of thy covenant I have sent forth thy prisoners out of the pit wherein is no water (Zec 9:11)—no water to quench our thirst, no water to cleanse our souls, but mud and mire to defile them. This was the design of His death, as He Himself speaks: “Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations” (Luk 24:46-47). And Peter, in his discourse at Cornelius’ house, comprises in this the intent of the whole Scripture: “To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins” (Act 10:43). As this was the justifying blood in the time of the prophets, so it will be the justifying blood to the end of the world. By this blood only the robes of any are made white (Rev 7:14); by this blood, the accuser of the brethren is overcome and cast in his suit¹¹ (Rev 12:10-11).

From *The Works of Stephen Charnock*, Vol. 3 (Edinburgh; London; Dublin: James Nichol; James Nisbet and Co.; G. Herbert, 1865), 501-504; in the public domain.

Stephen Charnock (1628-1680): English Puritan Presbyterian pastor, theologian, and author; born in St. Katherine Cree, London, England, UK.



¹⁰ **metonymy** – substitution for a thing’s name the name of one of its attributes or of a related thing.

¹¹ **cast in his suit** – Satan’s accusations against believers (his “suit” or “lawsuit” against them) fail in the court of heaven (are cast down or cast out) because Jesus the Lamb has paid for the sins of those who have trusted in His blood; His blood satisfied God’s broken law. Believers overcome Satan by the Lamb’s precious blood.

FORGIVENESS FOR THE GREATEST SINNERS

John Flavel (c. 1627-1691)

IS Christ dead? And did He die the violent, painful, shameful, cursed, slow, and succorless¹ death of the cross? Then surely there is forgiveness with God and plenteous redemption for the greatest of sinners that by faith apply the blood of the cross to their poor guilty souls. So speaks the apostle: “In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins” (Col 1:14). “The blood of Jesus Christ...cleanseth us from all sin” (1Jo 1:7). Two things will make this demonstrable.

First, that there is sufficient efficacy in this blood of the cross to ex-piate the greatest sins.

Secondly, that the efficacy of it is designed and intended by God for believing sinners. How clearly do both these propositions lie in the word?

First, that there is sufficient efficacy in the blood of the cross to ex-piate and wash away the greatest sins. This is manifest, for it is *precious blood*, as it is called. “Ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold...But with the precious blood of Christ” (1Pe 1:18-19). This preciousness of the blood of Christ riseth from the union it hath with that person, “who is over all, God blessed for ever” (Rom 9:5). And on that account [it] is styled² the blood of God (Act 20:28); and so, it becomes royal, princely blood. Yes, such for the dignity and efficacy of it, as never was created or shall ever run in any other veins but His. The blood of all the creatures in the world, even a sea of human blood, bears no more proportion to the precious and excellent blood of Christ than a dish of common water to a river of liquid gold. On the account of its invaluable preciousness, it becomes satisfying and reconciling blood to God. So the apostle speaks: “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” (Col 1:20). The same blood which is *redemption* to them that dwell on earth is *confirmation* to them that dwell in heaven. Before the efficacy of this blood, guilt

¹ **succorless** – destitute of help or relief.

² **styled** – called.

vanishes and shrinks away as the shadow before the glorious sun. Every drop of it hath a voice and speaks to the soul that sits trembling under its guilt better things than the blood of Abel (Heb 12:24). It sprinkles us from all evil, i.e., an unquiet and accusing conscience (Heb 10:22). For having enough in it to satisfy God, it must needs have enough in it to satisfy conscience.

Conscience can demand no more for its satisfaction, nor will it take less, than God demands for His satisfaction. And in this blood is enough to give both satisfaction.

Secondly, as there is sufficient efficacy in this blood to expiate the greatest guilt, so it is as manifest that the virtue and efficacy of it is intended and designed by God for the use of believing sinners. Such blood as this was shed, without doubt, for some weighty end, that some might be the better for it. Who they are for whom it is intended is plain enough from Acts 13:39: “And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses.”

That the remission of the sins of believers was the great thing designed in the pouring out of this precious blood of Christ appears from all the sacrifices that figured³ it to the ancient church. The shedding of that typical⁴ blood spake a design of pardon. And the putting of their hands upon the head of the sacrifice spake the way and method of believing, by which that blood was then applied to them in that way and is still applied to us in a more excellent way. Had no pardon been intended, no sacrifices would have been appointed.

Moreover, let it be considered, this blood of the cross is the blood of a surety that came under the same obligations with us and in our name or stead⁵ shed it; so, of course, [it] frees and discharges the principal offender or debtor (Heb 7:22). Can God exact satisfaction from the blood and death of His own Son, the surety of believers, and yet still demand it from believers? It cannot be. “Who,” saith the apostle, “shall lay any thing to the charge of God’s elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died” (Rom 8:33-34). And why are faith and repentance⁶ prescribed as the *means* of pardon? Why doth

³ **figured** – foreshadowed; prefigured.

⁴ **typical blood/type** – Old Testament sacrifice foreshadowed or symbolized Christ’s blood in the New Testament.

⁵ **stead** – place.

⁶ **repentance** – Repentance to life is a saving grace, whereby a sinner, out of a true sense of his sins and apprehension of the mercy of God in Christ does with grief and hatred of his sin turn from it to God, with full purpose to strive after new obedience. (*Spurgeon’s Catechism*, Q. 70; available from CHAPEL LIBRARY)

God everywhere in His Word call upon sinners to repent and believe in this blood, encouraging them so to do by so many precious promises of remission; and declaring the inevitable and eternal ruin of all impenitent and unbelieving ones who despise and reject this blood? What, I say, doth all this speak, but the possibility of a pardon for the greatest of sinners, and the certainty of a free, full, and final pardon for all believing sinners? Oh, what a joyful sound this is! What ravishing voices of peace, pardon, grace, and acceptance come to our ears from the blood of the cross!

The greatest guilt that ever was contracted upon a trembling, shaking conscience can stand before the efficacy of the blood of Christ no more than the sinner himself can stand before the justice of the Lord with all that guilt upon him.

Reader, the word assures thee, whatever thou hast been or art, that sins of as deep a dye as thine have been washed away in this blood. “I was a blasphemer, a persecutor, injurious; but I obtained mercy,” saith Paul (1Ti 1:13). But it may be thou wilt object, “This was a rare and singular instance, and it is a great question whether any other sinner shall find the like grace that he did.” No question of it at all, if you believe in Christ as he did; for he tells us, “For this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all longsuffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting” (1Ti 1:16). So, upon the same grounds [that] he obtained mercy, you may obtain it also.

Those very men who had a hand in the shedding of Christ’s blood had the benefit of that blood afterwards pardoning them (Act 2:36). There is nothing but unbelief and impenitence⁷ of heart [that] can bar thy soul from the blessings of this blood.

From *The Whole Works of the Reverend John Flavel*, Vol. 1 (London; Edinburgh; Dublin: W. Baynes and Son; Waugh and Innes; M. Keene, 1820), 327-329; in the public domain.

John Flavel (c. 1630-1691): English Presbyterian minister; born at Bromsgrove, Worcestershire, England, UK.



He prayed till He groaned, He groaned till He wept, He wept till He sweat, He sweat till He bled, He bled till He died; and all to make us a warm bath wherein our cold and foul souls might be washed pure and clean. Never was anything washed at so high a rate as the Christian soul.

—*Thomas Adams*

⁷ **impenitence** – unrepentance; hardness of heart.

SANCTIFIED BY JESUS' BLOOD

Charles H. Spurgeon (1834-1892)

Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate.—Hebrews 13:12

IN one sense, sanctification¹ is wholly the work of the Lord Jesus Christ; but there is another meaning, which is more usually affixed to the term, in which sanctification is rightly described as the work of God the Holy Spirit. Many disputes have arisen concerning this doctrine because all men do not distinguish between the two meanings of the same word.

There is one kind of sanctification that signifies setting apart. In that sense, God's people were sanctified from all eternity.² They were sanctified in election³ before they had a being, for they were even then set apart from the impure mass to be vessels of honor meet for the Master's use.

Further, as redemption has in it much of peculiarity and speciality,⁴ God's people were sanctified, or set apart, by the blood of Christ when on Mount Calvary, He offered up Himself, an offering without spot or blemish, for the sins of His people. So, it is true that Jesus is not only made unto us wisdom and righteousness, but also sanctification.

You will remember that, in one of my recent sermons,⁵ the text of which was "Jesus only," I made the remark that it was "Jesus only" for sanctification. I have not had any reason to retract that expression, for there is a sense in which sanctification, as far as it means setting apart, is an eternal work and is a work wholly completed for us by the election of the Father and the blood of Jesus Christ.

Still, sanctification sometimes, and most generally, too, signifies another thing: it means the work of the Spirit within us. There is a work that God the Holy Ghost carries on from the first moment of our

¹ **sanctification** – Sanctification is the work of God's Spirit whereby we are renewed in the whole man after the image of God and are enabled more and more to die to sin and live to righteousness. (*Spurgeon's Catechism*, Q. 34) See Free Grace Broadcaster 215, *Sanctification*, available from CHAPEL LIBRARY.

² See FGB 236, *God's Eternal Purpose* and 237, *God's Decrees*, available from CHAPEL LIBRARY.

³ See FGB 255, *Election and Reprobation*, available from CHAPEL LIBRARY.

⁴ **speciality** – special or distinctive characteristics.

⁵ See *Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*, No. 2,634, " 'Jesus only,' a Communion Meditation."

spiritual birth to the last moment when we are taken to heaven—a work by which corruptions are overcome, lusts restrained, faith increased, love inflamed, hope brightened, and the spirit made fit to dwell with the glorified above. That is the work of God’s Holy Spirit; yet we must remember that, even though it is the work of the Holy Spirit,⁶ Jesus Christ even in this still sanctifies His people. For with what does the Holy Spirit sanctify them? Beloved, He sanctifies them with the precious blood of Jesus. We know that, when our Savior died, His sacrifice had a double object: one object was pardon, the other was cleansing; and both the blood and the water flowed from the same source to show us that justification and sanctification both spring from the same divine fountain. Though sanctification is the work of the Spirit in us, yet, to accomplish this purpose, the Holy Spirit uses the sacrificial blood of Jesus and the sacred water of His atonement applied to our heart, sprinkling us from dead works and purging us from an evil conscience that we may serve God without let⁷ or hindrance.

So then, Christian, in thy sanctification, look to Jesus. Remember that the Spirit sanctifies thee, but that He sanctifies thee through Jesus. He doth not sanctify thee through the works of the law, but through the atonement of Christ. And wilt thou therefore remember that the nearer thou livest to the cross of Jesus, the more of sanctification, growth, and increase in all spiritual blessings will His Spirit give to thee? So then, we see that, whatever sanctification may mean, the text is still true: “Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people⁸ with his own blood,⁹ suffered¹⁰ without the gate.”

Let us pause here a minute, and let each of us...ask this question: how far has Christ’s purpose of sanctifying me been answered in my own case? I know that, in one sense, I am completely sanctified; but, in another sense, I still feel my imperfections and infirmities. How far

⁶ See FGB 202, *The New Birth*, available from CHAPEL LIBRARY.

⁷ let – obstruction.

⁸ The Lord Jesus offered Himself and His blood without the city, or the camp, because He designed not either to confine the benefit of His offering unto that people [*the Jews*] or to take them in unto it as a camp, a city, a church, or congregation. But this “people” are elsewhere called “his people” (Mat 1:21), and “church” or “body” (Eph 5:25-27)—that is, all the elect of God, both Jews and Gentiles (1Jo 2:1-2). (Owen, *Hebrews*, Vol. 24, 445)

⁹ This is that which the Lord Jesus designed for His church; and *He did effect it by His own blood*. When the blood of Christ is mentioned in this matter, it is emphatically called “his own blood”: “Purchased his church with his own blood” (Act 20:28); “Washed us from our sins in his own blood” (Rev 1:5; Heb 9:12). (Owen, 445)

¹⁰ Jesus in His sufferings did *offer Himself unto God*. This is plain in the words. That He might sanctify the people with His blood, He “suffered”; for in that suffering, His blood was shed, whereby the people were sanctified. (Owen, 444)

have I progressed in sanctification during the past year? How much has my faith increased during the year? How many of my corruptions have I overcome? How much nearer am I living to Christ, now, than on the first Sabbath of last year? How much do I know of the Savior? How much closer do I approach in my likeness to Him? Have I more power in prayer? Am I more careful in my life? Is my spirit more loving than it used to be? Am I more decisive for that which is right? At the same time, am I meeker in standing up for it? Am I, in all respects, more like my Master than I was a year ago? Or, on the other hand, have I been going backward? Stand still, I cannot; I must either go forward in grace or go backward. Which have I been doing during the past year? And I charge thee, O my heart, whatever answer thou hast to give to these questions, still to remember that, if thou art never so much sanctified, thou hast not yet attained perfection.

I beseech thee, forget that which is behind and press forward toward that which is before, looking still unto Jesus, Who is both the Author and the Finisher of faith. The Lord give you so plenteously of His grace that you may be wholly sanctified, body, soul, and spirit; and I pray God to preserve you all unto His coming and glory.

From a sermon intended for reading on Lord's Day, February 4, 1900, preached at New Park Street Chapel, Southwark, on Lord's Day Evening, January 3, 1858.

Charles H. Spurgeon (1834-1892): Influential English Baptist preacher; born at Kelvedon, Essex, England, UK.



No wise man will purchase a trifle at a great price, much less the most wise God. Now the redemption of every soul stood in no less than the most precious blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. "You know," saith the apostle there, "that we were not redeemed with corruptible things as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, as a lamb without blemish or spot" (1Pe 1:18-19). All the gold and silver in the world was no ransom for one soul; nay, all the blood of the creatures, had it been shed as a sacrifice to the glory of justice, or even the blood which is most dear to us, as being derived from our own; I mean, the blood of our dear children, even of our first-born, the beginning of our strength, which usually has the strength of affection: I say, none of these could purchase a pardon for the smallest sin that ever any soul committed, much less was it able to purchase the soul itself. It is only the precious blood of Christ that is a just ransom.—*John Flavel*

Q. When was the redemption wrought by Christ? A. It was decreed from eternity; it was actually wrought on the cross (Col 1:20). 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.—*John Flavel*

PRAYER PURCHASED BY CHRIST'S BLOOD

Thomas Brooks (1608-1680)

But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.—Matthew 6:6

FOR the better management of this great duty, viz.,¹ closet² prayer, I beseech you take my advice and counsel in these...following particulars.

Be frequent in closet prayer and not now and then only. He will never make any yearnings of closet prayer that is not frequent in closet prayer. Now, that this counsel may stick,

Consider you are the favorites of heaven, you are greatly beloved, you are highly honored, you are exceedingly esteemed and valued in the court of the Most High. And remember that the petitions of many weak Christians, of many benighted³ Christians, of many tempted Christians, of many clouded Christians, of many staggering Christians, of many doubting Christians, of many bewildered Christians, and of many fainting Christians, etc., are put into your hands for a quick and speedy dispatch to the throne of grace.⁴ Thus you had need be frequent in your closets and improve your interest in heaven, or else many of these poor hearts may be wronged, betrayed, and prejudiced by your neglect. Such as are favorites in princes' courts, if they are active, diligent, careful, and watchful, may do much good for others. They may come as often as they please into their prince's presence and, with Queen Esther, have for asking what they please, both for themselves and others (Est 7). Oh, what a world of good may God's favorites do for others if they would be but frequent with God in their closets!

O sirs! If you have not that love, that regard, that pity, that compassion to your own souls, as you should have, yet, oh, let not others suffer by your neglect of private prayer! Oh, let not Zion suffer! Oh, let not

¹ viz. – from Latin *videlicet*: that is to say; namely.

² closet prayer – private prayer in a private room or inner chamber.

³ benighted – in a state of pitiful intellectual or moral darkness; ignorant.

⁴ speedy...throne of grace – dealing quickly with a need in prayer at Christ's throne of grace.

any particular saint suffer by your being found seldom in your closets.

Certainly, it might have gone better with the churches of Christ, with the concernments⁵ of Christ, and with many of the poor people of Christ, if most Christians had been more frequent with God in their closets. But,

Consider that this liberty to approach near to God in your closets cost Christ His dearest blood (Eph 2:13; Heb 10:20). Now, he that is not frequent with God in his closet tells all about him: he sets no great value upon that liberty that Christ hath purchased with His blood. The incomparable,⁶ the unparalleled price that Christ hath paid down upon the nail⁷ more than sixteen hundred years ago that we might have liberty and free access to His Father in our closets argues very strongly, yes, irrefragably,⁸ the superlative excellency of that liberty (1Pe 1:19). Oh, therefore, let us improve to purpose this blessed purchase of our Lord Jesus by being frequent with God in our closets.

Some dispute whether one drop of Christ's blood was sufficient for the pardon of our sins and redemption of our souls. My intention is not to dispute but to offer a few things for your consideration.

First, it must be granted that by reason of the hypostatic union,⁹ a drop of Christ's blood was of an inestimable worth and excellency; and the value of His passion¹⁰ is to be measured by the dignity of His person. But,

Secondly, a proportion was to be observed between the punishment due to men and that which was suffered for man; that His sufferings might be satisfactory, two things were necessary: *the severity of the punishment*, as well as *the dignity of the person*. That the least drop of Christ's blood was not sufficient for the redemption of our souls may thus appear:

First, if it were, then the circumcision of Christ was enough, for there was a drop, if not many drops of blood shed.

⁵ **concernments** – matters of importance.

⁶ **incomparable** – with which there is no comparison for excellence.

⁷ **upon the nail** – immediately; without delay.

⁸ **irrefragably** – undeniably.

⁹ **hypostatic union** – “The doctrine of the hypostatic union, first set forth officially in the definition of faith produced by the Council of Chalcedon (A.D. 451), concerns the union of the two natures of deity and humanity in the one *hypostasis* or person of Jesus Christ. It can be stated as follows: In the incarnation of the Son of God, a human nature was inseparably united forever with the divine nature in the one person of Jesus Christ, yet with the two natures remaining distinct, whole, and unchanged, without mixture or confusion, so that the one person, Jesus Christ, is truly God and truly man.” (Elwell, 583)

¹⁰ **passion** – suffering of Jesus upon the cross of Calvary as set forth in the four Gospels.

Secondly, then His being crowned with a crown of thorns was sufficient, for it is most probable that they drew blood from Him.

Thirdly, then all Christ's sufferings besides were superfluous¹¹ and vain.

Fourthly, then God was unjust and unrighteous to take more than was due to His justice. But for any man to affirm that God hath taken beyond what was His just due is high blasphemy.

Fifthly, then Christ was weak and imprudent¹² to pay more than He needed; for what need was there of His dearest heart blood if a drop from His hand would have saved our souls? Let schoolmen¹³ imagine what they please, it is certain that not one dram¹⁴ of that bitter cup that Christ drank off could be abated,¹⁵ in order to His Father's full satisfaction and man's eternal redemption. Christ hath given under His own hand that it was necessary that He should suffer many things (Luk 24:26). O sirs! Shall Christ shed not only a few drops of blood, but His very heart blood to purchase you a freedom and liberty to be as often in your closets with His Father as you please; and will you only now and then give God a visit in private? The Lord forbid.

From *The Complete Works of Thomas Brooks*, ed. Alexander Balloch Grosart, Vol. 2 (Edinburgh; London; Dublin: James Nichol; James Nisbet and Co.; G. Herbert, 1866), 250-251; in the public domain.



It is God's sight of the blood of Christ which, at bottom, is the reason for the salvation of the redeemed. How I rejoice to think that, although my faith-sight of the blood gives me peace, still, if that eye of mine ever gets dim, it does not imperil my salvation; for God's eye is not dim, and it is always fixed on the blood of His Son. In sacred contemplation, the Father surveys the sacrifice of His Son with supreme satisfaction; and as He sees the blood, He spares us for His Son's sake. But then, dear friends, the blood of the covenant is also to be extolled *because it is our sight of it that brings us peace*. When we realize that Jesus died for us, there is peace in our soul. I do not know whether you are like me in this respect, but there are times when I, as it were, take the fact of my eternal safety for granted. but there comes a severe sickness, or deep depression of spirit, there comes a time when death has to be looked in the face, and the sense of past sin rises vividly before me, and then it is a blessed thing to stand once more at the foot of the cross, and to look up to Jesus hanging there, and to say... "Yes, yes, yes, I am safe! I am saved by the precious blood of Jesus."

—Charles Spurgeon

¹¹ **superfluous** – beyond what is required; unnecessary.

¹² **imprudent** – not showing care for the consequences of an action.

¹³ **schoolmen** – term for the teachers of philosophy and theology in the Middle Ages. Also known as *scholastics*, examples would be Thomas Aquinas (1225-74) and John Duns Scotus (c. 1265-1308).

¹⁴ **dram** – 1/16 of an ounce.

¹⁵ **abated** – lessened.

THIS IS MY BLOOD SHED FOR MANY

Charles H. Spurgeon (1834-1892)

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

THE Lord Jesus Christ was then alive, sitting at the table; yet pointing to the cup filled with red wine, He said, “This is my blood, which is shed for many.” This proves that He could not have intended that the wine was literally His blood. Surely it is no longer necessary to refute the gross and carnal dogma of transubstantiation,¹ which is obviously absurd. There sat the living Lord at the supper with His blood in His veins; therefore, the wine could not literally be His blood. Value the symbol, but to confound it with the thing symbolized would draw into the idolatrous worship of a piece of bread.

Our Lord spoke of His blood as shed when as yet the nails had not pierced His hands and feet, and the spear had not broached² His side. Is not this to be accounted for by the fact that our Lord was so taken up with the thought of our redemption by His death that He speaks of that as done, which He was so resolved to do? Enjoying loving intercourse³ with His chosen disciples, He spake freely; His heart did not study accuracy so much as feeling; so, in speech as in feeling, He antedated⁴ His great work of atonement and spoke of it as done. To set forth the future intent of the blessed ordinance of the Lord’s Supper, He must treat His death as an accomplished fact; and His complete absorption in His work made it easy and natural for Him to do so. He ignores moods and tenses; “his work is before him” (Isa 40:10; 62:11).

By the use of such language, our Lord also shows us the abiding presence of the great sacrifice as a power and an influence. He is the “Lamb slain from the foundation of the world” (Rev 13:8), and therefore He speaks of His blood as shed. In a few hours, it would be literally poured forth; but long ages before, the Lord God had regarded it as done. In full confidence in the great Surety that He would never draw back from the perfect fulfilment of His engagements, the Father saved multitudes

¹ **transubstantiation** – doctrine that Christ’s physical body and blood are present in the bread and wine of the Lord’s Supper, upheld by the Roman Catholic Church.

² **broached** – pierced.

³ **intercourse** – communication between individuals.

⁴ **antedated** – preceded.

in virtue of the future sin offering. He communed with myriads⁵ of saints on the strength of the purification that would, in the fulness of time, be presented by the great High Priest. Could not the Father trust His Son? He did so, and by this act set us a great example of faith. God Himself is in very deed the Father of the faithful, seeing that He Himself reposed⁶ the utmost confidence in Jesus, and because of what He would yet do in the pouring out of His soul unto death, He “opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers.”⁷ What, my soul! Canst thou not trust the sacrifice now that it has been presented? If the foresight of it was enough for God, is not the consummation of it enough for thee? “Behold the Lamb of God” (Joh 1:29, 36), Who even before He died was described as taking away the sin of the world. If this was so before He went to Calvary, how surely is it so now that He has said in verity and truth, “It is finished” (Joh 19:30)!

Dear friends, I am going to preach to you again upon the cornerstone of the gospel. How many times will this make, I wonder? The doctrine of Christ crucified is always with me. As the Roman sentinel in Pompeii stood at his post even when the city was destroyed, so do I stand to the truth of the atonement though the church is being buried beneath the boiling mud-showers of modern heresy. Everything else can wait, but this one truth *must* be proclaimed with a voice of thunder. Others may preach as they will, but as for this pulpit, it shall always resound with the substitution of Christ. “God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ” (Gal 6:14). Some may continually preach Christ as an example, and others may perpetually⁸ discourse upon His coming to glory: we also preach both, but mainly “we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness; But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God” (1Co 1:23-24).

You have before you a cup filled with wine, which Jesus has just blessed and presented to His disciples. As you look into its rosy depths, hear Him speak of the cup as His blood; for thus He would teach us a solemn lesson.

Note, first, the *importance* of the precious blood of Christ. The vital importance of the great truth of the death of Christ as a [substitutionary]

⁵ **myriads** – countless numbers.

⁶ **reposed** – placed.

⁷ **opened...all believers** – verse from the ancient Latin hymn *Te Deum Laudamus* (Latin = “Thee, O God, we praise”). It is often attributed to Ambrose (c. 339-c. 397) or Augustine (354-430), though some historians view it as written earlier.

⁸ **perpetually** – in a way that never ends or changes.

sacrifice is set before us in this cup, which is the memorial of His blood shed for many.

Blood represents suffering, but it goes further and suggests suffering unto death. “The blood is the life thereof” (*see* Gen 9:4; Lev 17:14); and when blood is too copiously⁹ shed, death is suggested. Remember that in the sacred supper you have the bread as a separate emblem of the body, and then the wine as a separate symbol of the blood; thus, you have a clear picture of death, since the blood is separated from the flesh. “As often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord’s death” (1Co 11:26). Both acts are essential.

You are invited to fix your attention upon *the death of Christ, and upon that only.* In the suffering of our Lord unto death, we see the boundless stretch¹⁰ of His love. “Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends” (Joh 15:13). Jesus could not be more loving to us than to yield Himself unto death, even the death of the cross. O my Lord, in Thy bloody sweat, and in the piercing of Thy hands, feet, and side, I see the highest proof of Thy love! Here I see that Jesus “loved me, and gave himself for me” (Gal 2:20). Beloved, I beg you to consider often and lovingly the sufferings of your Redeemer, unto the pouring out of His heart’s blood. Go with Him to Gethsemane, thence to the house of Caiaphas and Annas, then to Pilate’s hall, and [to] Herod’s place of mockery! Behold your Lord beneath the cruel scourges and in the hands of the executioners upon the hill of shame. Forget not one of the sorrows that were mingled in the bitter cup of His crucifixion—its pain, its mockery, its shame. It was a death reserved for slaves and felons. To make its deep abysses absolutely bottomless, He was forsaken even of His God. Let the darkness of “Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?”¹¹ (Mar 15:34) bear down upon your spirit until, as you sink in awe, you also rise in love. He loved you better than He loved Himself! The cup means love, even to the shedding of His blood for you. It means something more.

In our hymn, we have called our Lord, “Giver of life for life,”¹² and that is what this cup means. He gave up His life that we might live. He stood in our place and stead in the day of Jehovah’s wrath, receiving into His bosom the fiery sword that was unsheathed for our destruction. The pouring out of His blood has made our peace with God.

⁹ **copiously** – abundantly.

¹⁰ **boundless stretch** – utmost degree to which something can be extended.

¹¹ **Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani** – *Aramaic* = “My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me?”

¹² **Giver...life** – from “Praise to Christ” by Horatius Bonar (1808-1889); *Hymns of Faith and Hope: Second Series* (London: J. Nisbet & Co., 1886), 27.

Jehovah made the soul of His only-begotten an offering for sin that the guilty might be cleared. "He hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him" (2Co 5:21). That is what the wine in the cup means: it means the death of Jesus in our stead. It means the blood poured out from the heart of the incarnate God that we might have fellowship with God, the sin that divided us being expiated by His death.

Our blessed Savior would have us hold His death in great reverence: it is to be *our chief memory*. Both the emblems of the Lord's Supper set forth the Savior's death. This peculiarly Christian ordinance teaches nothing if it does not teach this. Christ's death for men is the great doctrine of the church. We profess ourselves partakers of the merit of His death when we come to this table; our Lord's death is then remembered, shown, declared, testified, and trusted in. Evidently, the Lord Jesus means us to treat the fact of His death as a truth to be made pre-eminently prominent: He would not have instituted an ordinance specially to remind us of the shedding of His blood if He had not regarded it as the forefront of His whole earthly career.

The other ordinance of our holy faith also sets forth our Lord's death. Are we not "buried with him by baptism into death" (Rom 6:4)? Is not baptism an emblem of His being immersed beneath the waves of sorrow and death? Baptism shows us that participation in Christ's suffering by which we begin to live; the Lord's Supper shows us that participation in Christ's suffering by which that life is sustained. Both institutions point to His death.

Besides, beloved, we know from Holy Scripture that this doctrine of the death of Christ is the very core of Christianity. Leave out the cross, and you have killed the religion of Jesus. Atonement by the blood of Jesus is not an arm of Christian truth; *it is the heart of it!* Even as the Lord said of the animal, "The blood is the life thereof" (see Gen 9:4; Deu 12:23), so is it true of the gospel: the sacrificial death of Jesus is the vital point of our profession. I know nothing of Christianity without the blood of Christ. No teaching is healthy that throws the cross into the background. The other day, when I was enquiring about the welfare of a certain congregation, my informant told me that there had been few additions to the church, although the minister was a man of ability and industry. Furthermore, he let me see the reason for failure, for he added, "I have attended there for several years, and during all that time I do not remember hearing a sermon upon the sacrifice of Christ. The atonement is not denied, but it is left out." If this is so, what is to become of our churches? If the light of the atonement is put

under a bushel, the darkness will be dense. In omitting the cross, you have cut the Achilles tendon¹³ of the church: it cannot move nor even stand when this is gone. Holy work falls to the ground: it faints and dies when the blood of Jesus is taken away. The cross must be put in the front more than ever by the faithful because so many are unfaithful. Let us endeavor to make amends for the dishonor done to our divine Master by those who deny or dishonor His vicarious sacrifice: let us abide steadfast in this faith while others waver, and [let us] preach Christ crucified if all else forbear.¹⁴ Grace, mercy, and peace be to all who exalt Christ crucified!

This remembrance of the death of Christ must be a constant remembrance. The Lord's Supper was meant to be a frequent feast of fellowship. It is a grievous mistake of the church when the communion is held but once in the year or once in a quarter of a year; and I cannot remember any Scripture which justifies once in the month. I should not feel satisfied without breaking bread on every Lord's Day. It has come to me even oftener than once a week; for it has been my delight to break bread with many a little company of Christian friends. Whenever this Supper is celebrated, we declare that "Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures" (1Co 15:3). We cannot think of that death too often. Never was man blamed in heaven for preaching Christ too much; nay, not even on earth to the sons of God was the cross ever too much spoken of. Outsiders may say, "This man harps only upon one string." Do you wonder?

The carnal mind is enmity against¹⁵ God, and it specially shows its hatred by railing at the cross. Sainly ones find here, in the perpetual monotony of the cross, a greater variety than in all other doctrines put together. Preach you Christ, and Christ, and Christ, and Christ, and nothing else but Christ, and opened ears shall find in your ministry a wondrous harmony of linked sweetnesses, a charming perfectness of all manner of delicious voices. All good things lie within the compass of the cross: its outstretched arms overshadow the whole world of thought; from the east even unto the west it sheds a hallowed influence. Meanwhile, its foot is planted deep in the eternal mysteries, and its top pierces all earthborn clouds and rises to the throne of the Most High. Christ is lifted up upon the cross that He may draw all men unto Him (Joh 12:32); and if we desire to draw them, this must be our magnet.

¹³ **Achilles tendon** – strong tendon joining the muscles in the calf of the leg to the bone of the heel.

¹⁴ **forbear** – refrain from or resist.

¹⁵ **enmity against** – hostile toward; an enemy of.

Beloved, the precious blood of Christ should be had by us in vivid remembrance. There is something to me most homely about that cup filled with the fruit of the vine. The bread of the Supper is the bread of our common meal, and the wine is the usual attendant of feasts. That same pure blood of the grape that is set on our sacramental table, I drink with my friend. Look at those ruby, ruddy¹⁶ drops, suggesting your Lord's own blood. I had not dared to invent the symbol, nor might any man of mortal mold have ventured on such a thing, lest he should seem to bring that august¹⁷ death down to our lowly level. But in infinite condescension,¹⁸ Jesus Himself chooses the symbol; and while by its *materialism*¹⁹ He sets forth the reality of the sacrifice, by its *commonness* He shows how freely we may partake thereof. He would not have us know Him after the flesh and forget the spiritual nature of His griefs; but yet He would have us know that He was in a real body when He bled, and that He died a real death and became most truly fit for burial; and therefore, He symbolizes His blood, not by some airy fancy²⁰ or mystic sign, but by common wine in the cup. Thus would He reach us by our eye and by our taste, using two gates of our nature that lead up to the castle of the heart but are not often the King's roadway thereto. O blessed Master, dost Thou arrange to teach us so forcibly? Then let us be impressed with the reality of the lesson and never treat Thy passion²¹ as a thing of sentiment, nor make it a myth, nor view it as a dream of poesy.²² Thou shalt be in death most real to us, even as is that cup whereof we drink.

The dear memorials of our Lord's blood-shedding are intended for a *personal remembrance*. There is no Lord's Supper except as the wine touches the lip and is received into the communicant's own self. All must partake. He says, "Drink ye all of it" (Mat 26:27). You cannot take the Lord's Supper by deputy or representative; you must each of you approach the table and personally eat and drink. Beloved, we *must* come into personal contact with the death of Christ. *This is essential*. We must each one say, "[He] loved me, and gave himself for me" (Gal 2:20). *In His blood, you must be personally washed; by His blood you must be personally reconciled to God; through His blood you must personally have access to God; and by His blood you must personally overcome the*

¹⁶ **ruddy** – red.

¹⁷ **august** – impressing the emotions or imagination as magnificent; awe-inspiring.

¹⁸ **condescension** – coming down or stooping to people's understanding.

¹⁹ **materialism** – existence in the material world as bread and wine, not spiritual.

²⁰ **airy fancy** – fanciful fantasy.

²¹ **passion** – sufferings of Jesus recorded in the Gospels, especially on the cross.

²² **poesy** – poetry.

enemy of your souls. As the Israelite's own door must be smeared with the blood of the Paschal lamb,²³ so must you individually partake of the true Sacrifice and know each one for himself the power of His redemption.

As it is personal, it is a charming fact that it is a *happy remembrance*. Our remembrance of Christ is chastened with repentance, but it is also perfumed with faith. The Lord's Supper is no funeral meal, but a festival! Most fitly do we begin it with the giving of thanks and close it with a hymn. It is by many called the "Eucharist,"²⁴ or the giving of thanks: it is not a fast, but a feast. My happiest moments are spent with the King at His table when His banner over me is love. The death of Christ is a well-spring of solemn joy. Before our great Sacrifice died, the best token of His death was the blood of bulls and of goats (Heb 9:13; 10:4). See how the victims writhe in death! The sacrificial knife does terrible work at the foot of the altar; it is hard to stand by and see the creatures bleed. After our Lord's death was over, the blood of animals was not the type, but the blood of the grape. That which was terrible in prospect is joyous in remembrance. That which was blood in the shedding is wine in the receiving. It came from Him with a wound, but it comes to us with a blessing. His blood is our song in the house of our pilgrimage, and it shall add the best music to our heavenly harmonies as we sing before the throne: "Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood...to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen" (Rev 1:5). If our Lord Jesus has made the memory of His love to be sweeter than wine, let us never turn from it as though it had become a distasteful theme. Let us find our choicest pleasures at the cross.

Once more, our Savior meant us to maintain the doctrine of His death and the shedding of His blood for the remission of sins, even to the end of time, for He made it to be of *perpetual remembrance*. We drink this cup "till he come" (1Co 11:26). If the Lord Jesus had foreseen with approbation²⁵ the changes in religious thought that would be brought about by growing "culture," He would surely have arranged a change of symbols to suit the change of doctrines. Would He not have warned us that, towards the end of the nineteenth century, men would become so "enlightened" that the faith of Christendom must take a new departure, and therefore He had appointed a change of sacramental memorials? But He has not warned us of the coming of those eminently great

²³ **Paschal lamb** – lamb sacrificed at the Jewish celebration of Passover.

²⁴ **Eucharist** – (Greek = **εὐχαριστία**, *eucharistia*) thanksgiving.

²⁵ **approbation** – official approval.

and wise men who have changed all things and abolished the old-fashioned truths for which martyrs died.

Brethren, I do not believe in the wisdom of these men, and their changes I abhor; but had there been any ground for such changes, the Lord's Supper would not have been made of perpetual obligation. The perpetuity of ordinances indicates a perpetuity of doctrine. But hear the moderns talk—"The Apostles, the Fathers, the Puritans—they were excellent men, no doubt, but then, you see, they lived before the uprise of those wonderful scientific men who have enlightened us so much." Let me repeat what I have said. If we had come to a new point as to believing, should we not have come to a new point as to the ordinances in which those beliefs are embodied? I think so. The evident intent of Christ in giving us settled ordinances, and especially in settling this one that so clearly commemorates His blood-shedding, was that we might know that the truth of His sacrifice is forever fixed and settled and must unchangeably remain the essence of His gospel. Neither nineteen centuries nor nineteen thousand centuries can make the slightest difference in this truth, nor in the relative proportion of this truth to other truths, so long as this dispensation²⁶ lasts. Until He comes a second time without a sin offering unto salvation, the grand work of His first coming must be kept first and foremost in all our teaching, trusting, and testifying. As in the southern hemisphere the cross is the mariner's guide, so, under all skies, is the death of our Redeemer the polestar of our hope upon the sea of life. In life and in death we will glory in the cross of Christ, and never be ashamed of it, be we where we may.

From a sermon delivered on Lord's Day morning, July 3, 1887,
at the Metropolitan Tabernacle, Newington.



There are many Christians who dwell on the crucifixion of Jesus in a one-sided way. We cannot dwell too much on the glorious truth that Jesus Christ was crucified for our sins. Yet it is not on the crucifixion, but on Christ the Lord, that our faith rests; and not on Christ as He was on the cross do we dwell, but on Christ who was dead and is risen again and liveth at the right hand of God, making intercession for us... When Jesus died upon the cross, He put away our sins; but this was only removing an obstacle. The ultimate object of His death upon the cross was His resurrection and ascension, that through suffering, He should enter into glory; that He should be the perfect Mediator between God and man, presenting us unto God and bestowing upon us all the blessings that He has purchased for us with His precious blood.

—*Adolph Saphir*

²⁶ **dispensation** – God's arrangement of events by divine rule and care; in this case, the age of Christ Jesus and His churches.

THE ONLY PHYSICIAN OF SICK SOULS

John Flavel (c. 1630-1691)

*They that be whole need not a physician, but they
that are sick.—Matthew 9:12*

THE Lord Jesus Christ is the only physician for sick souls. The world is a great hospital, full of sick and dying souls, all wounded by one and the same mortal weapon: sin. Some are senseless of their misery, feel not their pains, [and] value not a physician. Others are full of sense, as well as danger: [they] mourn under the apprehension of their condition and sadly [wail over] it. The merciful God hath, in His abundant compassion to the perishing world, sent a physician from heaven and given Him His orders under the great seal of heaven for His office (Isa 61:1-2): “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me; because he hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted.” He opened and read in the audience of the people (Luk 4:18). He is the tree of life, whose leaves are for the healing of the nations (Rev 22:2): He is *Jehovah Rophe*, “the Lord that healeth us”; and He is *Jehovah Tsidkenu*, “the Lord our righteousness.” The *brazen serpent* that healed the Israelites in the wilderness was an excellent type of our Great Physician, Christ, and is expressly applied to Him (Joh 3:14). He rejects none that come and heals all whom He undertakes. But more particularly, I will point at those diseases that Christ heals in sick souls...

First, the guilt of sin: This is a mortal wound, a stab in the very heart of a poor sinner. It is a fond and groundless distinction that Papists make of sins *mortal* and *venial*; all sin, in its own nature, is mortal: “The wages of sin is death” (Rom 6:23). Yet though it be so in its own nature, Christ can and doth cure it by the sovereign [fragrant medicine] of His own precious blood: “In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace” (Eph 1:7). This is the deepest and deadliest wound the soul of man feels in this world. What is guilt but the obligation of the soul to everlasting punishment and misery? It puts the soul under the sentence of God to eternal wrath—the condemning sentence of the great and terrible God from which nothing is found more dreadful and insupportable. Put all pains, all poverty, all afflictions, all miseries in one scale and God’s condemnation in the other, and you weigh but so many feathers against

a talent of lead. This disease, our Great Physician, Christ, cures by remission, which is the dissolving of the obligation to punishment, the loosing of the soul that was bound over to the wrath and condemnation of God (Col 1:13-14; Heb 6:12; Mic 7:17-19). This remission being made, the soul is immediately cleared from all its obligations to punishment. "There is therefore now no condemnation" (Rom 8:1). All bonds are cancelled, the guilt of all sins is healed or removed, original and actual, great and small. This cure is performed upon souls *by the blood of Christ*. Nothing is found in heaven or earth besides His blood that can heal this disease. "Without shedding of blood there is no remission" (Heb 9:22). Nor is it any blood that will do it, but that only which dropped from the wounds of Christ. "By his stripes we are healed" (Isa 53:5). His blood only is innocent and precious blood (1Pe 1:19); blood of infinite worth and value, blood of God (Act 20:28); blood prepared for this very purpose (Heb 10:5). This is the blood that performs the cure, *and how great a cure it is!* For this cure, the souls of believers shall be praising and magnifying their great Physician in heaven to all eternity: "To him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood...to him be glory and dominion, for ever and ever" (Rev 1:5).

Next, I shall show you that Jesus Christ is the *only* Physician of souls. None [is] like Him for a sick sinner. This will be evident in diverse respects.

First, none [is] so wise and judicious¹ as Jesus Christ to understand and comprehend the nature, depth, and danger of soul-diseases. Oh, how ignorant and unacquainted are men with the state and case of afflicted souls! But Christ hath "the tongue of the learned, that [He] should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary" (Isa 50:4). Only He understands the weight and depth of inward troubles of sin.

Secondly, none [is] so able to cure and heal the wounds of afflicted souls as Christ is; only He hath those medicines that can cure a sick soul. The blood of Christ, and nothing else in heaven or earth, can cure the mortal wounds that guilt inflicts upon a trembling conscience...Conscience may be numbed by stupefactive² medicines prepared by the devil for that end; but pacified it can never be but by the blood of Christ (Heb 9:22).

How inexpressible is the grace of God in providing such a physician as Christ for the sick and dying souls of sinners! Oh, blessed be God

¹ **judicious** – showing good judgment or sense.

² **stupefactive** – producing unconsciousness or insensibility.

that there is a balm in Gilead and a Physician there (Jer 8:22); that their case is not desperate, forlorn, and remediless, as is the case for the devils and damned!...Though there be such a disease as is incurable,³ yet take this for thy comfort: never any soul was sick, i.e., sensibly burdened with it and willing to come to Jesus Christ for healing; for under that sin the will is so wounded that they have no desire to Christ. O inestimable mercy—the sickest sinner is capable of a perfect cure! There be thousands and ten thousands now in heaven and earth who said once, never was any case like theirs—so dangerous, so hopeless. The greatest of sinners have been perfectly recovered by Christ (1Ti 1:15; 1Co 6:11). O mercy, never to be duly estimated!

What a powerful restraint from sin is the very method ordained by God for the cure of it! “By his stripes we are healed” (Isa 53:5). The Physician must die that the patient might live; no other thing but the blood, the precious blood of Christ, is found in heaven or earth able to heal us (Heb 9:22, 26). This blood of Christ must be freshly applied to every new wound sin makes upon our souls (1Jo 2:1-2)...Oh, think of this again and again, you that so easily yield to the solicitations of Satan. Is it so easy and so cheap to sin as you seem to make it? Doth the cure of souls cost nothing? True, it is free to us, but was it so to Christ? No, it was not. He knows the price of it, though you do not...If you renew your sins, you must also renew your sorrows and repentance (Psa 51; 2Sa 12:13). You must feel the anguish and pain of a troubled spirit again, things with which the saints are acquainted; of which they may say, as the church, “Remembering mine affliction...the wormwood and the gall. My soul hath them still in remembrance” (Lam 3:19). Yes, and if you will be remiss in your watch and so easily incur new guilt, though a pardon in the blood of Christ may heal your souls, yet some rod or other—in the hand of a displeased Father—shall afflict your bodies or smite you in your outward comforts (Psa 89:23).

If Christ be the only Physician of sick souls, what sin and folly is it for men to take Christ’s work out of His hands and attempt to be their own physician! Thus do those that superstitiously endeavor to heal their souls by afflicting their bodies; not Christ’s blood, but their own must be the plaister.⁴ As blind Papists, so many carnal and ignorant Protestants strive by confession, restitution, reformation, and stricter course of life to heal those wounds that sin hath made upon their souls without any respect to the blood of Christ. This course shall not profit

³ Matthew 12:31 – “All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men.”

⁴ **plaister** – bandage spread with curative substance to cover and close wounds.

them at all. It may divert for a time but *can never heal them*: the wounds so skinned over will open and bleed again. God grant it be not when our souls shall be out of the reach of the true and only remedy.

How sad is the case of those souls to whom Christ hath not yet been a physician? They are mortally wounded by sin and are likely to die of their sickness. No saving, healing applications have hitherto been made unto their souls. This is the case of the greatest part of mankind, yes, of them that live under the discoveries of Christ in the gospel.

What cause have they to be glad that are under the hand and care of Christ in order to a cure, and who do find, or may upon due examination find, their souls are in a very hopeful way of recovery! Can we rejoice when the strength of a natural disease is broken, and nature begins to recover ease and vigor again? And shall we not rejoice much more when our souls begin to mend, recover sensibly, and all comfortable signs of health and life appear upon them? [This is] particularly when the understanding, which was ignorant and dark, hath the light of life beginning to dawn into it. Such is that in 1 John 2:27. When the will that was rebellious and inflexible to the will of God is brought to comply with that holy will, saying, “Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?” (Act 9:6). When the heart, which was harder than an adamant,⁵ is now brought to contrition for sin and can mourn as heartily over it as ever a father did for a dead son, a beloved and only son; when its aversations⁶ from God are gone, at least have no such power as once they had; but the thoughts are now fixed much upon God, and spiritual things begin to grow pleasant to the soul; when times of duty come to be longed for, and the soul [is] never better pleased than in such seasons; when the hypocrisy of the heart is purged out, so that we begin to do all that we do heartily as unto the Lord and not unto men (Col 3:23; 1Th 2:4); when we begin to make conscience of secret sins (Psa 119:113) and of secret duties (Mat 6:5-6); when we have an equal respect to all God’s commandments (Psa 119:8); and our hearts are under the holy and awful eye of God, which doth indeed overawe our souls (Gen 17:1). Oh, what sweet signs of a recovering soul these are! Surely such are in the skillful hand of the great Physician, Who will perfect what yet remains to be done.

From *The Whole Works of the Reverend John Flavel*, Vol. 2 (London; Edinburgh; Dublin: W. Baynes and Son; Waugh and Innes; M. Keene, 1820), 190-192; 195-199; in the public domain.



⁵ **adamant** – stone of surpassing hardness; impregnable to any force.

⁶ **aversations** – moral turnings away.

THE PRICE OF REGENERATION

George Swinnock (1627–1673)

Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.—John 3:3

READER, canst thou find in thine heart to hug and embrace such a traitor [as sin] against the gracious and blessed God? To stretch out thine hand against God, as every sinner doth, and strengthen thyself against the Almighty? (Job 15:25). Stretch out thine hand against God? No man should lift a word against God! Our mouths should shew forth His praise. Stretch out thine hand against God? No man should lift a thought against God! Our meditations¹ of Him should be *for* Him. Stretch out thine hand against God? Every man should bow down and worship before God and be satisfied in whatever He saith and doth. Stretch out thine hand against God? Thou art bound to stretch out thine heart, hand, and tongue to think, speak, and act—and all for God and all little enough.

Take sin in its effect; what evil is like it? It is the cause of all other evils. Dost thou consider the emptiness, vanity, and vexation in the creatures?² (Ecc 1:3); the heavens fighting against man, the earth bearing thorns and briars; the diseases in men's bodies, the burning fever, watery dropsy,³ aching teeth, running gout,⁴ racking stone,⁵ renting colic,⁶ the quivering lips, trembling loins, ghastly looks of dying men; the horrors of conscience, flashes of the internal fire, curses of the law, wrath of God, torments of hell⁷—all these are the fruits of sin. All misery calleth sin “mother”; this is the root of bitterness upon which they grow: “The wages of sin is death” (Rom 6:21, 23; 5:12). That big-bellied word *death* hath all these woeful brats⁸ in its belly, and sin is the father that begat them. Sin turned Adam out of paradise; angels into devils;

¹ See FGB 245, *Meditation*, available from CHAPEL LIBRARY.

² **creatures** – in this context, a reference to human beings, not animals.

³ **watery dropsy** – swelling from excessive accumulation of watery fluid in cells & tissues.

⁴ **running gout** – disease characterized by painful inflammation of certain joints, especially of the big toe and foot, caused by deposits of sodium urate [*salt of uric acid*] in them.

⁵ **racking stone** – torment of kidney or gall stones.

⁶ **renting colic** – severe abdominal pain caused by obstruction, inflammation, infection of the intestine, or intestinal gas.

⁷ See FGB 211, *Hell*, available from CHAPEL LIBRARY.

⁸ **big-bellied...brats** – sin as the father and *death* as a woman pregnant with many evil children.

Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes; flourishing families, cities, kingdoms into ruinous heaps; sin shuts heaven against man and laid the foundation of that dark vault of hell; sin kindled the fire of hell; sin feeds it with fuel and will keep it burning forever. Oh, what an evil sin is! Who would not hate it more than hell!

Is it good to play with such fire as sin is? Didst thou believe sin to be the cause of all this, thou wouldst never open thy heart or mouth more for it. Dost thou know that as where the effect is good, the cause is better; so where the effect is bad, the cause is worse? Can there be worse effects than eternal separation from God and suffering the vengeance of eternal fire? How bad is sin, then, which is the cause of them!

Take sin as a punishment; and it is the evil, the only evil [of which] there is no suffering like [being] given up to a course of sinning. Reader, take heed of continuing an hour longer in thine ungodly practices! It may be thou hast been ready to think [that] it [is] a great happiness to sin without control, to run in the road of the flesh, to meet with no rubs,⁹ [and] to prosper though thou art wicked. I tell thee...that the infinite God never claps a more dreadful curse on any man or woman on this side [of] hell than to give them up to sin. If God should give thee up to the sword, famine, most painful diseases, to thy most cruel, potent, and malicious enemies to be racked by them at pleasure, these were nothing to this—to be given up to one sin. When God hath used His rods scourging men, and they will not reform, then He takes this axe, and presently execution followeth. To be delivered up to the power of men may be the lot of God's sons, but to be delivered up to the power of sin is the portion of rebels and reprobates.

This is the stinging whip with which God punisheth Ephraim. Ephraim is joined to idols—there is his impiety¹⁰ (2Ti 3:13; 2Th 2:10-11). But what grievous punishment shall he have for his God-provoking idolatry? “Let him alone” (Hos 4:17). It is not, “I will send the raging pestilence, or cruel famine, or bloody sword,” but “He is joined to idols, let him alone. I will not have him disturbed or molested, but he shall have his will, though it proves his everlasting woe” (Rom 1:21-22; Psa 81:11-12; Hos 8:11). It is a woe with a witness for God to let thy lusts, like so many ravenous lions, loose upon thee, and to lay the reins of thy sins upon thy own neck. We read of one delivered up to Satan, yet he was saved (1Co 5:1-13 *cf.* 2Co 2:5-11); but never of any delivered up to their sins, but they were damned.

⁹ **rubs** – hindrances or difficulties in a situation.

¹⁰ **impiety** – ungodliness.

It was a sad sight that Abraham saw when he beheld flakes of fire rained from heaven upon the Sodomites. But it was a sadder [sight] that Lot beheld when he saw the fire of hell burning in their hearts and breaking out in their lives, and his righteous soul was vexed therewith.

Reader, have a care that thou never in thy heart plead more for sin; who would open his mouth for such a monster when there is no evil like it? Doth God offer thee anything to thy hurt when He would make a separation between thy soul and thy sins? Doth He desire anything to thy disadvantage when He desireth thee to give a bill of divorce to sin, which is the source of all sorrows, the only enemy of thy best friend—the ever-blessed God—and to be given up to which is the greatest plague and punishment on this side [of] hell? Tell me, is not regeneration excellent, which killeth such venomous serpents, which executeth such traitors, which mortifieth¹¹ these earthly members, and dasheth these brats of Babylon against the wall!

[Now], the price paid for this pearl doth loudly speak its excellency. Reader, little dost thou think what regeneration cost. I tell thee and thou mayest well wonder at it: the Son of God came from heaven, suffered the boundless rage of devils and infinite wrath of God in man's nature, upon this very errand: to purchase regeneration and sanctification for poor sinners. Read and admire: "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot" (1Pe 1:18-19). See the worth of this ware by that which it cost, the precious blood of Christ; surely it was a jewel of inestimable value which the Son of God thought worth His precious blood.

As lightly as thou thinkest of the death of sin and the life of righteousness, the Lord Jesus underwent more than anyone in hell feels, to buy them of His Father for the sons of men. Ah, none knoweth but God and Christ what it cost to buy off man's debts and guilt and to procure a new stock of holiness for His poor bankrupt creature to set up with again. "Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness" (1Pe 2:24). Had man kept his original purity, the Lord Jesus might have spared all His pains. The second Adam came to restore that jewel to man, of which the first Adam robbed him (Ti 2:14; Joh 10:10). This rare jewel, this choice mercy, was regeneration and holiness, and this Christ looks upon as the full reward of His sufferings. "He shall see the travail of

¹¹ **mortifieth** – puts to death; See FGB 201, *Mortification*, available from CHAPEL LIBRARY.

his soul, and be satisfied” (Isa 53:11). The truth is, Christ had exceeding hard labor—the Greek fathers call it unknown sufferings; He had many a bitter pang, many a sharp throe;¹² but for joy that children are born of God, that those throes bring forth a numerous issue of new creatures, He forgets His sorrows. “He shall see the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied” (Isa 53:11).

Consider, friend, did Christ esteem regeneration worth His blood to merit it, and is it not worth thy prayers, tears, and utmost endeavors to obtain it? Did Christ come to destroy the works of the devil, which is sin (1Jo 3:8), and wilt thou build them up? Did the Lord Jesus come to build up the temple of holiness, and wilt thou pull it down? Did Christ think it worth the while to be reproached, condemned, crucified, and all to make thee holy, and wilt thou be such an enemy to the cross of Christ as by continuing in sin to deprive Him of that which He earned so dearly? Why wilt thou bind thyself to be a slave to Satan, when He redeemed thee with such a vast sum?

Did the merciful God send His Son into the world to bless thee, in turning thee from thine iniquity, and canst thou look upon that great blessing as thy bondage? (Act 3:26). Believe it, God had servants enough, even angels that are ever ready to do His will, to send ordinary gifts by. Surely then, it was some extraordinary present that He thought none worthy to carry and would trust none with but His only Son. God “sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities” (Act 3:26). I hope, reader, thou wilt have higher thoughts of holiness and worse thoughts of sin all thy days. Surely the Son of God was not so prodigal¹³ of His most precious blood, as to pour it out for anything that was not superlatively¹⁴ excellent.

From *The Works of George Swinnoek, M.A.*, Vol. 5 (Edinburgh; London; Dublin: James Nichol; James Nisbet and Co.; G. Herbert, 1868), 179-182; in the public domain.

George Swinnoek (1627–1673): Puritan preacher educated at Cambridge and Oxford; born in Maidstone, Kent, England, UK.



The Lord Jesus, out of His incomprehensible love unto His people, would spare nothing, avoid nothing, deny nothing that was needful unto their sanctification, their reconciliation, and dedication unto God. He did it with
His own blood.—*John Owen*

¹² **throe** – intense or violent pain and struggle, especially in childbirth.

¹³ **prodigal** – recklessly wasteful.

¹⁴ **superlatively** – in the highest degree.

THE VALUE OF CHRIST'S BLOOD

Octavius Winslow (1808-1878)

IT would seem impossible by any illustration or argument to overestimate the intrinsic¹ value of Christ's atoning blood. There are some things in religion of which we may entertain a too exalted and exaggerated conception. For example, we may have too high a view of the church of Christ, exalting it above Christ Himself. We may hold too exaggerated and too exclusive views of church ordinances, displacing and magnifying them, substituting their observance for vital religion, for a change of heart, for faith in Christ exclusively for justification.² But no such danger lies in our study of the blood of Christ. Here our views cannot be too high, our contemplation too profound, our hearts too loving and adoring.

Consider for a moment, beloved, the ends³ that were accomplished by the shedding of Christ's blood. We often estimate the value of a means⁴ by the end it secures. The atonement⁵ of Christ was to meet the claims of God's moral government.⁶ By man's sin its holiness had been invaded, its authority contemned,⁷ its sanctions, laws, and commands outraged. Over all its glory a cloud had passed. God's eternal purpose⁸ was to save man. But He could save him only by an expedient⁹ that would remove that cloud and cause the glory it shaded to shine forth with deeper and more resplendent¹⁰ luster. The expedient that would thus meet the claims of the divine government must be divine. The atonement that would link justice with mercy and holiness with love in the salvation of the church must be infinite in its character and priceless in its worth. Such, in a few words, were the two grand ends to

¹ **intrinsic** – relating to the essential nature of a thing.

² **justification** – Justification is an act of God's free grace, wherein He pardons all our sins (Rom 3:24; Eph 1:7) and accepts us as righteous in His sight (2Co 5:21) only for the righteousness of Christ imputed to us (Rom 5:19) and received by faith alone (Gal 2:16; Phi 3:9). (*Spurgeon's Catechism*, Q. 32) See Free Grace Broadcaster 187, *Justification*, both available from CHAPEL LIBRARY.

³ **ends** – intended results; goals or results that one seeks to achieve.

⁴ **means** – methods by which something is accomplished.

⁵ See FGB 227, *Atonement*, available from CHAPEL LIBRARY.

⁶ **moral government** – God's righteous and moral rule over His image-bearers.

⁷ **contemned** – treated with contempt.

⁸ See FGB 236, *God's Eternal Purpose*, available from CHAPEL LIBRARY.

⁹ **expedient** – something appropriate to the purpose.

¹⁰ **resplendent** – shining; dazzling in appearance.

be secured and which were secured by the offering up of the Lord Jesus Christ. Viewed only in this light, how precious does the blood of Christ appear!

Blood that could harmonize the divine attributes—uphold the righteousness of the divine government, making it honorable and glorious in God to save sinful man—must be precious. It is precious blood because it is virtually the blood of God. This is a strong but scriptural expression. Paul, in his parting address to the Ephesian elders, employs it: “the church of God, which he has purchased with his own blood” (Act 20:28). This it is which stamps the atoning blood of the Savior with such dignity and virtue—it is the blood of Jehovah-Jesus. It possesses all the worth and glory of the Godhead—all the divine virtue and efficacy of the deity. From this it derived its power to satisfy, its virtue to atone, its efficacy to cleanse. And this is the reason one drop of this precious blood, falling upon a sin-burdened conscience, in a moment dissolves the weighty load and fills the soul with joy and peace in believing. And this is why there exists not a stain of human guilt that the atoning blood of Immanuel cannot utterly and forever efface.¹¹ Why, in a word, it is blood that cleanses from ALL sin (1Jo 1:9; 2Co 7:1).

But it follows that it is the blood of a pure and sinless humanity, and this by no means lessens our idea of its preciousness. A deep mystery, we admit, is the incarnation of God.¹² But mystery confronts us everywhere and in everything; therefore, it would be unphilosophical, as unbelieving, to cavil¹³ at this fundamental doctrine of Christianity—the profoundest mystery in the universe—because it transcended, though it does not contradict, human reason.

Our humanity is the incarnation of a spiritual nature; we are not one, but three parts—body, soul, and spirit¹⁴—and yet we do not deny our own being. Let us go to Bethlehem and see this great sight, not to reason, but *believe*, not to fathom, but *adore*. How great the folly of man in his endeavor to sound the depths of God’s infinity!

Here, then, exists an essential element of preciousness in Christ’s blood—it flowed from arteries untouched, untainted by the virus of sin, from a humanity upon which not a breath of pollution had fallen. He “knew no sin” (2Co 5:21). Begotten by the Holy Spirit, He was that

¹¹ **efface** – wipe out.

¹² See FGB 234, *Incarnation*, available from CHAPEL LIBRARY.

¹³ **cavil** – raise trivial objections.

¹⁴ Sound theologians over the centuries have debated whether man is *tripartite*, consisting of three parts, or *bipartite*, consisting of two parts.

“holy thing” born of a virgin. “Holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners” (Heb 7:26), He came into the world, lived in it, died in it, and left it as pure and immaculate¹⁵ as the deity He enshrined.¹⁶ His Godhead wore not the tainted fleece, was clad not in the leprous garment of our fallen, apostate, and sinful nature. A holy Savior offered up a sinless atonement for unholy, sinful man. Hence, the preciousness of His blood.

Look at it, beloved, in this light, and let your hearts glow with love, adoration, and praise, as you kneel before the cross and feel the distilling upon your conscience of that blood that pardons, covers, cancels all your guilt. From this view of the essential preciousness of Christ's blood, let us consider its preciousness to God. We have referred to the law of the Levitical dispensation¹⁷ relating to blood.

The minute directions that God gave concerning it marked the sacredness and significance of blood in His holy eyes. Can we for a moment suppose that the blood of the atonement offered upon the cross of Calvary should not be of yet more infinite worth and preciousness to God? Beloved, we believe that of all the great truths upon which...we are expatiating,¹⁸ we shall find in the hour of death *this* to be the most essential, supporting, and comforting—the preciousness and acceptableness to God of that divine sacrifice for sin upon which, in that dreadful moment, we are relying—to know then that God is well pleased with that blood upon which, as a poor, guilty sinner about to appear in eternity, we rest; and that in *its* acceptance, *we* are accepted; by *its* virtue, *we* are washed whiter than snow; and that through *its* merit, *we* shall appear before God in righteousness! Surely, with this truth witnessed to by the Holy Spirit in our souls, death will have no sting and the grave no terror.

The atoning blood of Christ must be precious to the Father because it is the blood of His own Son. There was an essential, close, and endearing relation between the victim and the offeror. Is the blood of a child precious to the heart of a parent? Thus, precious was the blood of Jesus to God. Oh, methinks, if ever God loved His Son, He loved Him then! Gazing from His throne in glory upon the dreadful scene on earth, He saw the Son Who dwelt in His bosom from eternity [crucified] upon the accursed tree, suffering the just for the unjust, vindicating the [moral uprightness] of His government and pouring out His

¹⁵ **immaculate** – free from all sin.

¹⁶ **enshrined** – Christ's deity was “enshrined,” that is, “enclosed” within His human nature.

¹⁷ **Levitical dispensation** – time when the Levitical priests served the LORD.

¹⁸ **expatiating** – speaking or writing at great length.

holy soul unto death that He might bring us unto God.

But there was not only the yearning of parental affection in God; but in the sacrifice of His beloved Son, He beheld the salvation of His church fully and forever secured. In that vital stream, He saw the life, the spiritual and eternal life, of His people. His everlasting love had found a fit and appropriate channel through which it could flow to the vilest sinner...And when God raised His Son from the grave, exalted Him to glory, set Him at His own right hand, and then sent down the Holy Spirit, the seal of His acceptance was affixed to His own deep sense of the preciousness of Christ's blood. "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation¹⁹ for our sins" (1Jo 4:10).

Trembling soul—approach this atonement! God has accepted it; will you? Surely you may with confidence and hope rely upon that sacrifice with which He has thus declared Himself well pleased. You cannot come to it too hopefully, nor rely upon it too implicitly,²⁰ nor believe in it too simply, nor rejoice in it too fervently! It is precious to God, and, in virtue of its preciousness, your person is precious, your prayers are precious, your offerings of love are precious—fragrant to Him as the "smell of a field which the Lord has blessed" (Gen 27:27). Plead but the precious blood of Christ for renewed forgiveness, urge it as your argument in prayer, and draw from it your motive to self-surrender as a holy, living sacrifice to God, and you shall not fail of acceptance with the Holy One.

From *The Precious Things of God* (New York: Robert Carter & Brothers, 1867), 160-163, in the public domain.



The Bible alone teaches us that God has made a full, perfect, and complete provision for the salvation of fallen man. It tells of an atonement made for the sin of the world by the sacrifice and death of God's own Son upon the cross. It tells us that by His death for sinners as their Substitute, He obtained eternal redemption for all that believe on Him. The claims of God's broken law have now been satisfied. Christ has suffered for sin, the just for the unjust. God can now be just and yet the justifier of the ungodly. It tells us that there is now a complete remedy for the guilt of sin—the precious blood of Christ—and peace and rest of conscience for all who believe on Christ. "Whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life" (Joh 3:15).

It tells us that there is a complete remedy for the power of sin.—*J. C. Ryle*

¹⁹ **propitiation** – "Propitiation has reference to the wrath or displeasure of God. To propitiate is to satisfy the divine justice and thus to appease His wrath. In the biblical usage of the term, the justice of God is satisfied by the propitiatory sacrifice." (Morton H. Smith, *Systematic Theology*, Vol. 1, 382.)

²⁰ **implicitly** – absolutely.