

THE BLOOD OF THE CROSS

by Horatius Bonar

Bonar's theological meditation on Christ's sacrificial blood shed at Calvary, emphasizing how this blood accomplishes redemption, forgiveness of sins, and reconciliation between sinful humanity and a holy God.

7 Chapters

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The Blood of the Cross

Preface

The Blood of the Cross by Horatius Bonner The Preface That blood has been shed upon the earth, and that this blood was no other than the blood of God, all admit who own the Bible. Acts 20, 28 But admitting this, the question arises, how far is each one of us implicated in this bloodshedding? Does not God take for granted that we are guilty? Nay, further, that this guilt is the heaviest that can weigh a sinner down. If so, then is it not a question for the saint, how far have I understood and confessed my participation in this guilt incurred by my long rejection of the slain one? How far have I learned to prize that blood, which, though once my accuser, is now my advocate? How far am I now seeing and rejoicing in the complete substitution of life for life, the divine life for the human, which that bloodshedding implies? Is it not also a serious question for the ungodly? Is this bloodshedding really and legally chargeable against me? Is God serious in saying that he means to reckon with me for this? Is this blood at this present moment resting over me as a cloud of wrath ready to burst upon my head as soon as my day of grace runs out? Is it on account of my treatment of this blood that I am to be dealt with at the seat of judgment? Is my eternity really to hinge on this? If so, what course can I pursue? Can I, like Pilate, take water and wash my hands, saying, I am innocent of the blood of this just man? Matthew 27, 24 No.

That is hopeless. My long rejection of it must involve at least something of the guilt. How much remains yet to be seen.

If I cannot clear myself, and if I cannot extenuate my crime, then I must either brave the trial and the sentence or make haste to enter my protest against the deed as the only course now remaining for me. In such a matter there is room neither for delay nor uncertainty. Let the matter at once be inquired into and put beyond the reach of doubt.

Is it possible that anyone can rest with less than a certainty of forgiveness so long as such a charge is hanging over him? Either he does not understand its meaning or he is resolved to set it at naught. No certainty can be greater than that I am guilty of the crime. Can I rest satisfied with anything but an equal certainty that this crime has been cancelled? To be sure of guilt and not to be sure of pardon is a fearful condition indeed.

To know that there is a Saviour whose blood cleanseth from all sin and yet not to know with equal certainty that all the blessings flowing from His blood have become mine must be misery beyond endurance. Uncertainty in such a case is the very mockery of my grief. Was the Gospel meant to bring us no certainty here? Is our believing it designed to give us no assured peace? Is this assured peace a plant not of this clime? Must we wait for it till we reach the land of peace? Is it not our portion here and is it not by having this that we are unable to face and battle with the darkest storms of life? Footnote You may see life and death, heaven and the deepest hell, glory and shame, when thou seest all thy sins done away in the blood of Jesus, shepherd's sound believer.

Did the sight of that blood assure us at once of our guilt and shall not the sight of it now assure us equally of our forgiveness? Did it formerly speak certain terror and shall it not now speak certain

peace? Or do we say But I am not sure whether I am really receiving it. This is my difficulty. Be it so.

Did you find the same difficulty in knowing whether you were rejecting it? Was it so easy to discover the rejection and is it so hard to discover the reception? You knew when you put it from you and do you not know when you would take it to you? Is there not something unnatural, something strange in this? If you are not sure whether you have received or rejected the blood of propitiation, then in so far as your peace is concerned, it is all one as if you knew you had rejected it. For uncertainty can bring no peace to the troubled spirit. It can heal no wounds.

It can kindle no hope. It leaves the soul in sorrowful darkness just as if the true light had not arisen or had withdrawn itself from view, just as if the peace-bringing blood had never been shed or had been hidden from your eyes. Uncertainty.

Who that realizes an accusing law and a sin-hating God can remain uncertain without also remaining most thoroughly and absolutely miserable. Footnote. It is no right faith but when we are bold with quiet minds to show ourselves in the presence of God, which boldness comes from assured confidence in the good will of God.

It is assuredness that maketh the conscience quiet and cheerful before God. Calvin's Institutes God has provided for this certainty and taken out of the way all that might mar it or generate the reverse. He has not only shed the blood of His dear Son but so presents it to us as sinners as to leave us no alternative but either to deny His testimony concerning it or to be at peace with Him and simply receiving it as that through which peace has been made by His Son upon the cross.

Shall we then cleave to this uncertainty as if it contains some mysterious blessing or shall we remain contented with it even for an hour seeing we cannot but feel that it is no blessing but a blighting curse? The amount of uncertainty in the present day is great. Thousands who name the name of Christ are not ashamed to own it. Few seem to have firm and abiding peace.

Few walk in the blessed consciousness of being forgiven and saved and reconciled. No wonder that we should be so feeble and sickly. No wonder that we should have so small success in laboring for God.

Conscious of personal friendship between Him and us what is there that we will not do or dare? What is there that He will not do for us and by us? Is this a time for uncertainty when judgments are darkening over us and God has arisen to smite the nations for their sins? Nothing now will keep us calm but certainty. Such a storm will need a sure anchor. A man may cheat his soul into tranquility when days are prosperous and skies are blue.

He may say, I hope it will go well with me at last and sit down contented with that meager hope. But when heaven and earth are shaken he cannot but tremble. His peace gives way at the first ruffle of the tempest.

He had no certainty to lean upon and his false security was broken in an hour. So must it be with everyone in these days of evil that is resting satisfied with less than a certainty. A certainty reared upon the one foundation.

And how many hearts are secretly throbbing now when they hear afar off the sound of advancing terror. They are confessing to themselves now that their rest was unreal, that their hope a fancy. They are filled with fear and grope for the wall as the blind.

They feel that they have hitherto taken hold of an uncertainty and flattered themselves with the idea that a man might very well be a Christian and yet know it not. But now they are moved. They feel that this is a covering narrower than that a man can wrap himself in it.

They had tried to make themselves believe that they were Christians of long standing. And now they find themselves no further on than ten or twenty years ago when first they awoke from their sleep of death. It is well, however, that the discovery be made however late.

It matters not how roughly the sleeper is awakened if only he be roused in time to flee from the encompassing danger. It is not yet too late. The cross is still standing on the earth.

The crucified one is still upon the mercy seat. If the favor of God has hitherto been a dark uncertainty it may yet be made sure. The way of reconciliation through the blood is as open as ever.

Reader, dress not till you have got matters thoroughly settled between God and your soul. This settlement must be on solid and immovable grounds. But these grounds God is presenting to you in the blood of his only begotten Son consider them well.

They are your all for eternity. You need not fear risking your soul upon them. Oh, well for you if you were but settled there there would follow a lifetime of peace in this world and eternity of glory in the world to come.

1 - The Accusation

THE BLOOD OF THE CROSS by Horatius Bonner Chapter 1 THE ACCUSATION Ye wish to bring this man's blood upon us, were the words of indignant scorn, with which the high priest resented the accusations which the apostles, in their preaching, brought against their nation, and specially against its rulers. Acts 5.28 They were the words of well-feigned contempt, but they were the words of fear. Ye wish to bring this man's blood upon us, was the utmost extent of an answer attempted by the high priest to these accusations, as if he would thus insinuate that they were as false as they were absurd and impossible.

This man's blood! What have we to do with it? What mean you by charging us with the guilt of it? The high priest had not mistaken the meaning of the apostles, nor misconstrued the drift of their charge. He was altogether correct in his statement. The apostles did intend to bring this man's blood upon them.

There was no need of calling witnesses to prove that they both said so and meant so. They denied it not. They were not ashamed of having made the declaration, nor afraid to repeat it.

They made no secret of it. They reiterated it in every sermon. They dwelt and insisted upon it continually.

It formed part of their message everywhere. Ye are the crucifiers of the Lord of glory. Your hands are stained with the blood of God's own Son.

This might be said to be the commencement or preamble of each sermon, each address. Bitterly was this felt by those against whom it was directed. The arrow went deep and rankled sore the wound.

The anger of the priests arose. They denied the charge. They treated it as a slander upon their good name and reviled the apostles as colluminators.

The charge of blood they resented and repelled. This does seem strange, for but a short time before they had come forward voluntarily to take upon them the guilt and the consequences of this bloodshedding. How eagerly they shouted, His blood be upon us and on our children.

Then they made light of this blood. They valued it at thirty pieces of silver. They rushed forward to shed it, as if they could not rest, till they had poured it out like water upon the earth.

But now they shrink from the imputation. They are stirred up to anger when it is cast upon them. Nay, so much do they resent it, that they seek to imprison or put to death those who make it.

Why this sudden change of feeling? Why this sensitiveness to the charge of blood guiltiness? It cannot be from dread of the men who bring it forward. They are few in number and have no power to injure. The charge which they make is accompanied with no threat, nor does it bring with it any temporal evil or danger.

It can issue in nothing disastrous or fatal, so far as man and time and the laws are concerned. Why then this nervous irritability under the charge brought against them by these unoffending men, these fishermen of Galilee? Conscience had made them cowards. Its murmurs were irrepressible and unwearied.

It tormented them before the time. Their attempts to smother and silence it only turned its course and sent it inward to work the disease into the whole frame, thereby producing that singular revulsion of feeling which has been noticed, and occasioning that wrathful sensitiveness which they so often exhibited under the preaching of the apostles. Bold enough before the deed was done, now they are full of continued alarms, as if haunted by a spectre.

For beset with weapons which they feared might every moment pierce them and avenge the blood which they had shed. Conscience said, His blood is upon you, and you know it. You shed it, and you cannot deny the deed.

You thirsted for the shedding of it. You gloried in the deed. It was innocent blood, and you knew it.

It was the blood of one who had never wronged you, who had done evil to none but good to all, against whom no charge of sin had been proved. It was blood shed by means of treachery and falsehood. You had to buy and bribe the traitor.

You suborned witnesses whose testimony you knew to be false. Everything connected with that trial cast dishonor upon those who did the deed or procured it to be done. It was, perhaps, after all, the blood of God's own Son.

He claimed this title. Many admitted it. There were signs of its being authentic.

What then, if it be really true? Could there be a crime like this? Such might be the workings of their spirits, the secret suggestions of consciences not at rest, but ever an anons starting from the slumber into which they had been in some measure lulled. No wonder that the men were cut to the heart and roused up to fiercest anger by the preaching of the apostles. The serpent had twined itself around them.

It might at times be torpid or asleep. But every fresh mention of the blood, or of the name of him whom they had slain, awoke it and sent its sting into their vitals. Hence they hated the mention of that blood and that name.

Vengeance was in their hearts and on their lips against everyone who might venture upon an illusion so hateful. In words they repelled the charge as slanderous. But the inner man confessed it.

Addressing the apostles, they might use the language of denial. Thou canst not say, I did it. But the fear, the anger, the remorse which awoke within them betrayed the consciousness of guilt in a way which could not be mistaken.

If they were not the actual murderers, they were at least accomplices in the deed of murder. And as such they were self-convicted and self-condemned. True children of Cain, both in their crime and in their evasive denial of it.

When Jehovah charged the first murderer with his brother's blood, how insolent, yet how evasive the answer, Am I my brother's keeper? As if he had said, Do you mean to charge me with Abel's blood? What do I know about it or its shedder? So with these Jewish rulers, they commit the crime, and then they challenge the proof of their guilt. Their hands are still stained with the crimson, yet they can say, Do you mean to bring this man's blood upon us? True children of Cain, for where was there rest now for them, fugitives and vagabonds as they now must be, at least in spirit? Carrying within them a hidden wound which they try in vain to cover, disturbed with horrors which they cannot allay, trembling at the sound of the shaken leaf or the rustling breeze. True children of Cain, they go out from the presence of the Lord and seek to drown their terrors in worldly undertakings, in dreams of vanity or in the lusts of pleasure.

The worm that never dies has begun to gnaw them. Yet they will not look on him whom they have pierced. They turn away in anger when he is set before them.

The blood they had shed would heal them, for it speaketh better things than that of Abel, but they will not be healed. The blood that alarmed them would also have laid all their alarms to rest, but they turn away from it. It accused them, no doubt.

Yet it brought forgiveness with it for the very crime which it laid to their charge. It spoke to them as to murderers, sinners for whose crime and conduct there could be no excuse. But it also said, this is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, even the chief.

1 Timothy 1.13-16 They might be blasphemers, persecutors, and injurious, but the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant. Nay, and of some of them, at least it might be said, they did obtain mercy, that in them the chief, Jesus Christ, might show forth all longsuffering for a pattern to them who should hereafter believe on him to everlasting life. The reader may perhaps call to mind here the conversion of Colonel Gardner.

He seemed in a moment to get a sight of the crucified one. His soul was overwhelmed. He walked up and down his chamber in intensest agony of heart, thinking himself the vilest sinner under the sun, as having all his life been crucifying Christ by his sin.

He immediately gave judgment against himself as most justly worthy of eternal damnation, settling it with himself that God's justice necessarily required that such an enormous sinner should be made an example of everlasting vengeance. See His Life by Doddridge

2 - Israel Guilty

The Blood of the Cross by Horatius Bonner Chapter 2. Israel Guilty But how far was this accusation true of all Israel? It is evident that the Apostles spoke indiscriminately and universally, not merely singling out certain individuals, the active doers of the deed, the more direct participators of the crime. They manifestly charged the whole nation with the guilt, speaking to those whom they designate ye men of Israel, all the house of Israel. They accused them of having taken and by wicked hands having crucified and slain this man approved of God.

Let all the house of Israel know that God hath made that same Jesus whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ. Acts 2.23.36 And again, ye killed the Prince of Life. Acts 3.15 Moreover, in several other passages this is spoken of by God as the peculiar guilt of the nation, that guilt which is now weighing them down with its curse, that guilt which shall above all others awake to remembrance when they see their returning King.

They shall look on me whom they have pierced. Zechariah 12.10 And again, every eye shall see him, and they also that pierced him. Revelation 1.7 This, then, is the great national crime, the crime that is pursuing them through all the earth.

For this blood God reckons all Israel responsible. It is not merely Caiaphas or Herod or Pilate. It is not merely the individuals who scourged and buffeted and mocked and nailed him to the tree.

It is all Israel that is accounted guilty. They are all counted guilty of rejecting him. As it is written, He came unto his own, and his own received him not.

So they are all counted guilty of crucifying him. And accordingly the curse and the desolation have come down upon all. But how is this? How are they all guilty? Why has the stroke of vengeance come upon the whole nation? Because the same Spirit was in all.

They consented to his death, like Saul in the case of Stephen, and kept the raiment of them that slew him. They acquiesced in the deed, if they did not perpetrate it. They stood by and hindered it not.

They did not protest against the deed, nor give any sort of testimony in condemnation of the doers. Therefore they are held as acquiescing, nay as participating in the sin. It is thus in human law.

If we belong to a corporation or society which resolves by a majority of its members to do an unlawful deed, we are held liable for all the consequences and penalties attaching to that deed, unless we enter our individual protest. Till we do this, we are held responsible for the act, whatever it may be. Most naturally and most righteously is it so.

Law and equity have always united to maintain this. It was thus that God dealt with Israel, and is to this day dealing with them still. It was thus that the apostles made good their fearful accusations wherever they went.

They sought to bring this man's blood upon the heads of all whom they addressed. Upon this they took their stand. With this sharp-edged weapon they assailed the consciences of the men of Israel.

And what a weapon, both for weight and sharpness! Irresistible in the hands of the Holy Spirit for convicting of sin. Wherever they preached Christ, they proclaimed men guilty of the blood of Christ. They maintained that though perhaps not the actual murderers, yet they were truly, legally, righteously guilty, personally responsible for the infinite crime.

And the conscience of Israel pleaded guilty to the charge. They could neither deny nor extenuate it. They did not fully admit the guilt.

But the way in which they met the charge showed how the inner man was responding to its truth. They were enraged. But their very anger was the outburst of a smitten conscience.

They might turn the accusation into a matter of scorn, but their scorning was the expression of hidden fear. Hence their hatred of the apostles. They looked upon them as men in possession of a secret, the promulgation of which was intolerable.

Could they but silence these bold proclaimers, they might have rest. For then the witness of the deed would be hushed and the evidence destroyed. But so long as these witnesses remained, going round the inhabitants of the land with their story, and producing the personal evidence of its truth, they could not but be troubled.

The crime was felt to be a real one, and the mention of it by such witnesses was like the stinging of an adder. Hence also the fearful agonies of conviction into which those were cast whose hearts the spirit touched. They felt that all was true.

They were murderers, murderers of the Lord of Glory. Their hands were full of blood. No wonder that they were pricked in their hearts and cried out, What shall we do? It was crime enough to cover a world with confusion of face, making its knees to smite against each other, and its lips to grow pale with shame and fear.

The messenger said, Thou art the man. Conscience said, I am, I am. What shall I do? His blood is upon me.

How shall I escape the curse, which such a deed must certainly draw down? What doom must now be mine? It was thus that the Holy Spirit convinced them of sin. He did not take up the whole catalogue of their transgressions and present it in all its black array to their consciences. He took up just one sin, but that was the sin of blood, and that blood was none other than the blood of God's own Son.

This was the arrow which He selected from His quiver, the sharpest and deadliest of all. It pierced even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow. It was a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

There were ten thousand other shafts ready fitted to the string against these sinners, but none so resistless, so terrible as this. God has for these eighteen hundred years been specially laying the sin of bloodshedding at the door of Israel. He has proclaimed them guilty by the ruin wherewith He has smitten them so fearfully.

It has been no common ruin, proving thereby that it was no common crime. Denial of it has availed them not. God has by His righteous acts declared that He reckons them guilty.

If not guilty, why these long ages of calamity? If not guilty, why the shame, the scattering, the banishment that have been there since their cup was filled? Conscience was whispering its forebodings when the apostles stood before the nation and declared it guilty. The whole dark future they could not foresee. But that they had sinned, and that they had shed blood which God required at their hand, they seemed unconsciously to admit, even when trying to evade or to scorn the accusations of the apostles.

Thus God spake, and Israel trembled. Thus the messengers of Jehovah made the charge, and Israel grew pale at the mention of it. Passing by every other sin, the accuser fastened upon this as the most crushing as well as the most unanswerable of all.

Thus God found a way into Israel's conscience, and thus it is, as we shall see, that He finds a way into the sinner's conscience still. He forces home this as His main charge, the charge which sinks deepest and rankles sorest, guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. Footnote How did the Spirit convince those three thousand, those patterns of God's converting grace? Did not the Lord begin with them for one principal sin, their murder and contempt of Christ, by imbruing their hands in His blood? There is no question, but now they remembered other sinful practices.

But this was the imprimus which is ever accompanied with many other items in God's bill of reckoning. *Shepherds Sound Believer*, page 8

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God's Controversy with 4 - the World

The Blood of the Cross by Horatius Bonner Chapter 4 God's Controversy with the World One of God's chief controversies with this world is respecting this blood. He has many other such controversies, but this is one of the chief. For here, His estimate and man's are at utter variance with each other, and respect both of the value and efficacy of this blood, no less than regarding the guilt of shedding it.

On many points they differ in their estimates. As to the value of the soul, of earth, of time, of eternity, they differ. But here they differ most of all.

And on this difference the sinner's eternity hinges. For it is according to what he thinks of this blood that he is saved or lost. This is the turning point of his salvation.

He may count it strange or hard that his everlasting welfare should be thus determined. Yet God declares that it must be so. He will not consent to treat that blood so lightly as the sinner, nor will He consent to deal favorably with the sinner that slights or scorns that blood.

Here He is inexorable, for the honor of His own Son is involved in it, and that honor must be maintained inviolable. And why should it be thought an incredible thing that it should be so? Grant but that this blood is what it is, the blood of God's beloved Son, and it is not difficult to see why He should, on such a point, be so awfully inflexible. Nay, shall we not say, how can it be otherwise? And wonder only how He can bear so much as one single slight offered to blood so precious in His eyes.

It was the blood of one whom He loved with an immeasurable love, and who was worthy of all that love even to the uttermost. It was the blood of Him who was the brightness of Jehovah's glory, and the express image of His person. How then was it possible that He could overlook any affront to the blood of one so exalted and so loved? How could He allow the foot of man to trample on it with scorn, or the eye of man to glance past it with indifference? He could not.

He must first cease to own Him as His Son, or to claim for Him the homage of creation as heir and Lord of all. Besides, had He not given up this Son for the ungodly? Had He not bruised Him and put Him to grief? Had He not allowed that blood to be shed for man? And if so, then how could He fail to resent anything like ingratitude on the part of those for whom He had delivered up His Son? Specially, how could He fail to be displeased with any contempt or indifference shown by them to that blood which for their sakes had been so freely poured out? Nothing but love to us could have led Him to such a sacrifice. He spared not His Son, just that He might spare us.

He allowed His life to be taken, that ours might be restored. And having provided a ransom so precious at such a cost, what need we reckon on but that He should be jealous as to the reception which this love of His was to have among men, and jealous of the treatment which that blood was to meet with at the hands of sinners? We may wonder indeed that man should look on that blood with indifference, as if it were a common thing. But we need not wonder that Jehovah should

regard that indifference as one of the blackest and most hateful of all transgressions.

Whatever man's indifference to it may be, that cannot alter God's estimate of the blood, it must remain the same. And, so long as it does, He must hold controversy with the world upon this point. Men may think it a small one.

He does not, cannot think so. They may imagine that it is of little consequence what their opinion of the blood may be, or whether they have any opinion on it at all. But on such a point there is no indifference with God.

He cannot lower His estimate and price. He cannot abandon the controversy, till the sinner has come up to His estimate, and learned to be at one with Him respecting the blood of His only begotten Son. If God and we, then, are at variance, how is this variance to cease? Is it by His adopting our judgment, or by our adopting His? It cannot be the former.

That were blasphemy even to imagine. It must be by the latter. If God and we are to be at one, it must be by our thinking as He thinks, and feeling as He feels in this matter.

We must take His estimate of the blood of His Son, else the variance cannot cease. It must be prolonged forever. What think you, then, of the blood of Christ? Is that which is so precious in God's eyes as precious in yours? Has the controversy between Him and you upon this point been solidly adjusted? And are you at one with Him in His estimate of the blood of His dear Son? If so, it is well.

For this is faith, and it is by this faith that you are saved. It was unbelief that led you to form so low an estimate of that blood, and it is faith which has led you to throw aside your own estimate and adopt that of God. Thus it is that we believe.

The Holy Spirit shows us the real nature of that blood we have been citing. He shows us whose blood it is, what wonders it is intended to effect, what power it has to cleanse, what efficacy to give peace. He tells us what God has written concerning this blood.

He tells us God's opinion of its value. And making known these things to us, He leads us to immediate peace. The new estimate which He enables us to form of this at once infuses peace.

If that estimate which God had given of it be true, then all that is needful for our peace has been accomplished. That infinitely precious blood sheds peace and sunshine into our souls. We see that blood as God sees it, and our consciences are unburdened, our souls are set at rest.

It is not in the nature of things that we could have peace till we have altered our estimate of that blood. Even though no vengeance hung over us for despising it, still our not valuing it would effectually shut out our peace. For in proportion as we see its value, in that proportion do we see how completely it has availed to make our peace, to magnify the law, to atone for sin, to open a fountain for all uncleanness.

Nothing but infinitely precious blood could do such things. This blood has done them all. We see this, and the burden falls off.

We see this, and our consciences are troubled no more. The blood of His cross has finished our peace, and that finished peace is all we need to banish every fear. Poor world, in what is thy

controversy with God respecting this blood to end? In life or death to thee? If in life, then thou hast much yet to unlearn, as well as much to learn.

Thou hast to unlearn thine own judgment and to learn God's. In so doing there is yet life for thee. If in death, then what a death it will be.

It will be God's vengeance for slighted blood. Poor world, dost thou think that there is no controversy between thee and God on this point? Then what means thy indifference? God is not indifferent in this matter, and if thou art indifferent, is there no controversy? Will God allow thee to be indifferent to that on which His whole heart is set? You know how indifference often provokes more than open hatred, so that even although there might be no hatred, this indifference is enough to provoke the eyes of His glory. The day of controversy with God will soon be done.

He will not always allow man to war this warfare. Judgment lingereth not, and damnation slumbereth not. The day for the final settlement of all such controversies is at hand.

The kindling fire will close them. The sentence of the judge will settle them. Do you not know in what way, and on whose side this great controversy shall be settled? Shall it be settled in your way, or in God's, on His side, or yours?

What God Thinks of 5 - This Blood

The Blood of the Cross by Horatius Bonner Chapter 5 What God Thinks of This Blood He counts it infinitely precious, more precious than all corruptible things such as gold and silver. Its value can only be measured by the greatness of Him from whom it flowed. Its efficacy, too, is boundless in His eyes.

He deems it available for the worst of cases, for the very extremity of guilt and pollution. He sees in it also the blood of the lamb without blemish and without spot. No tinge of sin does He behold in it.

The lamb which Israel was commanded to bring was to be a he-lamb of the first year without blemish for a burnt offering. Number 6:14 And in this type God made known what that lamb was to be, by whose bloodshedding, in the fullness of time, sin was to be put away. Even the eye of Jehovah could discover no spot in that lamb or in its blood.

The blood that cleanseth must itself be clean, and such was this. From the time that man sinned, God began to declare His mind respecting this blood and to show the value which He set upon it. Not only did He begin to make known to sinners that without shedding of blood there could be no remission of sin, but He began to declare His estimate of that blood, that man might learn that it was no common blood.

From the day of man's sinning till the time of a Saviour's coming, there was a continual testimony kept up by God respecting it, both by deed and word, by promise, by prophecy, and by type. This witness-bearing was maintained from age to age. Blood without blemish, blood of infinite price, this was the substance of the testimony.

And in that testimony was wrapped up the whole gospel. Glad tidings of great joy to man. On the foreseen efficacy and availableness of that blood, He began and carried on the work of reconciliation before the Reconciler had come.

On the credit of it, He began to save sinners four thousand years before it had been shed. Romans 3:25, Hebrews 9:15 For it was the value of it, irrespective of the time when it should actually be shed, that made it a righteous thing in God to bless the sinner so long before its shedding. The time of the shedding was of less moment in the eyes of him with whom one day is as a thousand years.

But the value of it was absolutely essential, if there was to be such a thing as substitution, or sin-bearing, or cleansing. That value He never allowed man to lose sight of for a day. Hebrews 9:19-22 During all these four thousand years He was continually speaking of that blood, pointing to it, calling every eye to gaze upon it, proclaiming His estimate of it in manifold ways.

Everything spoken or done under the former dispensation had reference to it, or was brought into connection with it. Each altar that was reared from Abel's down to that of Israel's in the wilderness was a divine witness to its efficacy. Each part of the tabernacle, its curtains, its posts, its floor, its laver, its tables, its vessels, its ark, its priests, all were made to bear witness to this, either by the

actual sprinkling of the blood upon them, or by the crimson hue of their carefully wrought and divinely appointed texture.

Though it was not possible that the blood of bulls or of goats could take away sin, or could have any value in the sight of God, yet even that blood was looked upon as sacred and holy, because prefiguring the blood of the better sacrifice. So excellent was the substance that it seemed to lend excellence to the shadow. So glorious was the antitype that it cast brightness upon the perishable type, and imparted to it a beauty, a value, and a reality, such as we attach to the picture or the statue of a beloved friend.

So efficacious was this blood of the Lamb of God that it made available the blood of the sacrificial Lamb for the worshippers in Israel, as to all outward privileges in the service of God. The want of blood shut the door of the tabernacle against them, and kept them without. Without that blood they were treated as outcasts, as men with whom Jehovah refused to deal, and to whom the privilege of even coming into his courts was denied.

With that blood they might enter in, for that blood was their title to admittance, their only but their sufficient warrant for taking their place among the worshippers of Jehovah. Nay more, the very altar on which that typical blood was shed and sprinkled was counted holy. It shall be an altar most holy are the words of God to Moses.

Exodus 29, 37 Such was the all-pervading virtue of the better blood, which remained to be shed in the ages yet to come. And then, as if to add something still more to this, it is said, Whatsoever toucheth the altar shall be holy. We read of the very shadow of Peter passing by, being looked to for healing.

And in the case of the blood of Christ, it is, as if its very shadow cast backwards over Jewish rites, a veil to consecrate them, diffusing an unseen influence over all the services of the sanctuary, and affixing a mysterious value to its ordinances, by reason of its own unutterable efficacy and excellence. In the case of the typical blood, this value was what we may call fictitious. It was not a value inherent in the thing itself, but pertaining to it solely by reason of its connection with that which was to come.

But this fictitious value of the type illustrates most vividly the real value of the antitype. If God did so much for Israel because of the ceremonial blood which yet derived all its efficacy from the other, what will He not do for those who avail themselves of that other which imparted the efficacy? If a sinner of old might come into the courts of the Lord as an accepted worshipper, simply because presenting to God the blood of bulls and goats, may not a sinner now come into the real, the immediate presence of Jehovah, with still greater certainty of acceptance, simply making mention of that divine blood which has flowed from the Lamb of God, the Word made flesh, who made His soul an offering for sin, and gave His life a ransom for the sins of many. The Law, having but the shadow of good things to come, could never, with these sacrifices which were offered year by year continually, make the comers thereunto perfect, that is, perfect as pertaining to the conscience, perfect in so far as the entire removal of guilt from the burdened conscience was concerned.

Had it been able to do so, then the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins. Hebrews 10, 1 and 2 But what the Law could not do with its rivers of ritual blood, that the

one sacrifice of Christ has done, at once and for ever. And they who will but consent to employ it in their transactions with God, will find that it can accomplish for them those things which the Apostle declares could not be accomplished by all the offerings of the sons of Levi.

It can make the comers thereunto perfect. It can so purge the worshipers that they shall have no more conscience of sins. Let us but employ this blood as Israel employed the other, and we shall find how thoroughly efficacious it is to purge the guilty conscience, to give perfect peace to the troubled soul, and to bring us into the presence of God with boldness and with joy.

Hebrews 4, 16 and 9, 14 An Israelite, when his conscience was burdened with sin, had just to go to his foal to take thence a lamb, and bring it to the altar. And though that could not do everything for his conscience, yet it could do much. But our lamb is already slain and offered, nay, accepted too.

We have but to avail ourselves of it, to employ it, nothing more. It is at all times available, at all times ready for our use. And we use it, when simply, believing what God has told us of its efficacy, and of His delight in it, we go to Him in the full assurance of faith, with no other plea, either within us or without us, but the blood alone.

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