

CHAPTER IX.

THE BLOOD OF THE COVENANT

“Behold the blood of the covenant, which the Lord hath made with you.” Ex. 24. 8; HEB. 9. 20.

“This cup is the new covenant in My blood.” 1 Cor. 11. 25; MATT. 26. 28.

“The blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified.” HEB. 10. 29.

“The blood of the everlasting covenant.” HEB. 13. 21.

THE blood is one of the strangest, the deepest, the mightiest, and the most heavenly of the thoughts of God. It lies at the very root of both Covenants, but specially of the New Covenant. The difference between the two Covenants is the difference between the blood of beasts, and the blood of the Lamb of God! The power of the New Covenant has no lesser measure than the worth of the blood of the Son of God! Your Christian experience ought to know of no standard of peace with God, and purity from sin, and power over the world, than the blood of Christ can give! If we would enter truly and fully into all the New Covenant is meant to be to us, let us beseech God to reveal to us the worth

and the power of the blood of the Covenant, the precious blood of Christ!

The First Covenant was not brought in without blood. There could be no Covenant of friendship between a holy God and sinful men without atonement and reconciliation; and no atonement without a death as the penalty of sin. God saith: "I have given you the blood upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls; for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul." The blood shed in death meant the death of a sacrifice slain for sin of man; the blood sprinkled on the altar meant that vicarious death accepted of God for the sinful one. No forgiveness, no covenant without blood-shedding.

All this was but type and shadow of what was one day to become a mysterious reality. What no thought of man or angel could have conceived, what even now passeth all understanding, the Eternal Son of God took flesh and blood, and then shed that blood as the blood of the New Covenant, not merely to ratify it, but to open the way for it and to make it possible. Yea, more to be in time and eternity, the living power by which entrance into the Covenant was to be obtained, and all life in it be secured. Until we learn to form our expectation of a life in the New Covenant, according to the inconceivable worth and power of the blood of God's Son, we never can have even an insight into the entirely supernatural and heavenly life that a child of God may live. Let us think for a moment on the threefold light in which Scripture teaches us to regard it.

In the passage from Hebrews 9. 15 we read "For this cause Christ is the Mediator of a new covenant, that a death having taken place for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first

covenant, they that have been called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance.” The sins of the ages, of the First Covenant, which had only figuratively been atoned for, had gathered up before God. A death was needed for the redemption of these: In that death and blood shedding of the Lamb of God not only were these atoned for, but the power of all sin was for ever broken.

The blood of the New Covenant is redemption blood, a purchase price and ransom from the power of Sin and the Law. In any purchase made on earth the transference of property from the old owner to the new is complete. Its worth may be ever so great and the hold on it ever so strong, if the price be paid, it is gone for ever from him who owned it. The hold sin had on us was terrible. No thought can realize its legitimate claim on us under God’s law, its awful tyrant power in enslaving us. But the blood of God’s Son has been paid. “Ye were redeemed, not with corruptible things as silver and gold, from your vain manner of life handed down from your fathers, but with precious blood, as of a lamb without spot, even the blood of Christ.” We have been rescued, ransomed, redeemed out of our old natural life under the power of sin, utterly and eternally. Sin has not the slightest claim on us, nor the slightest power over us, except as our ignorance or unbelief or half-heartedness allows it to have dominion. Our New Covenant birthright is to stand in the freedom with which Christ has made us free. Until the soul sees, and desires and accepts, and claims the redemption and the liberty which has the blood of the Son of God for its purchase price, and its measure, and its security, it never can fully live the New Covenant life.

As wonderful as the blood-shedding for our redemption is the blood-sprinkling for our cleansing. Here is indeed another of the spiritual mysteries of the New Covenant, which lose their power

when understood in human wisdom, without the ministration of the Spirit of life. When Scripture speaks of “having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience,” of “the blood of Christ cleansing our conscience,” of our singing here on earth (Rev. 1. 5), “To Him that washed us from our sins in His blood,” it brings this mighty, quickening blood of the Lamb into direct contact with our hearts. It gives the assurance that that blood, in its infinite worth, in its Divine sin-cleansing power, can keep us clean in our walk in the sight and the light of God. It is as this blood of the New Covenant is known, and trusted, and waited for, and received from God, in the Spirit’s mighty operation in the heart, that we shall begin to believe that the blessed promise of a New Covenant life and walk can be fulfilled.

There is one more thing Scripture teaches concerning this blood of the New Covenant. When the Jews contrasted Moses with our Lord Jesus, He spake: “Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, ye have not life in yourselves. He that eateth My flesh, and drinketh My blood, abideth in Me, and I in him.” As if the redeeming, and sprinkling, and washing, and sanctifying does not sufficiently express the intense inwardness of its action and its power to permeate our whole being, the drinking of this precious blood is declared to be indispensable to having life. If we would enter deep into the Spirit and power of the New Covenant, let us, by the Holy Spirit, drink deep of this cup—the cup of the New Covenant in His blood.

On account of sin there could be no covenant between man and God without blood. And no New Covenant without the blood of the Son of God. As the cleansing away of sins was the first condition in making a covenant, so it is equally the first condition of an entrance into it. It has ever been found that a deeper appropriation

of the blessings of the Covenant must be preceded by a new and deeper cleansing from sin. We know how in Ezekiel the words about God's causing us to walk in His statutes are preceded by "From all your filthiness will I cleanse you." And then later we read (38. 23, 25), "Neither shall they defile themselves any more with any of their transgressions; I will cleanse them: so shall they be My people, and I will be their God. Moreover, I will make a Covenant of peace with them; it shall be an everlasting Covenant with them." The confession and casting away, and the cleansing away of sin in the blood, are the indispensable, but all-sufficient, preparation for a life in everlasting Covenant with God.

Many feel that they do not understand or realize this wonderful power of the blood. Much thought does not help them; even prayer does not appear to bring the light they seek. The blood of Christ is a Divine mystery that passes all thought. Like every spiritual and heavenly blessing, this too, but this especially, needs to be imparted to us by the Holy Spirit. It was "through the Eternal Spirit" that Christ offered the sacrifice in which the blood was shed. The blood had the life of Christ, the life of the Spirit, in it. The outpouring of the blood for us was to prepare the way for the outpouring of the Spirit on us . It is the Holy Spirit, and He alone, who can minister the blood of the everlasting Covenant in power. Just as He leads the soul to the initial faith in the pardon that blood has purchased, and the peace it gives, He leads further to the knowledge and experience of its cleansing power. Here again, too, by faith –a faith in a heavenly power, of which it does not fully understand, and cannot define, the action, but of which it knows that it is an operation of God's mighty power, and effects a cleansing that does give a clean heart. A clean heart, first known and accepted by the same faith, apart from signs or feelings, apart from sense or reason, and then experienced in the joy and the fel-

lowship with God it brings. Oh! let us believe in the blood of the everlasting Covenant, and the cleansing the Holy Spirit ministers. Let us believe in the ministration of the Holy Spirit, until our whole life in the New Covenant becomes entirely His work, to the glory of the Father and of Christ.

The blood of the Covenant, O mystery of mysteries! O grace above all grace! O mighty power of God, opening the way, into the holiest, and into our hearts, and into the New Covenant, where the Holy One and our heart meet! Let us ask God much, by His Holy Spirit, to make us know what it is and works. The transition from the death of the Old Covenant to the life of the New was, in Christ, “through the blood of the Everlasting Covenant.” No otherwise will it be with us.