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Chapter XIV

The Blood of the Lamb

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Comrades and Friends, — We Salvationists are always glorying in the death of Jesus Christ, and testifying to the benefits that have flown from it to mankind. Perhaps no text is more frequently quoted than the words of John, 'The Blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanseth us from all sin.' And, perhaps, no song is more popular in our ranks than the one commencing:

There is a Fountain filled with Blood,  
Drawn from my Saviour's veins;  
And sinners, plunged beneath that flood,  
Lose all their guilty stains.

Not only do we glory in the sacrifice of Jesus Christ as something that happened two thousand years ago, and wear the sign of it on our Uniform, but we glory in the belief that unnumbered multitudes of our fellow creatures have been washed in the Fountain that was opened for sin and uncleanness when He died upon the cross. Nay, we go further than this, and triumph in the fact that His shed Blood has brought Salvation to our own hearts, lives, and homes.

It is this personal experience of Salvation which imparts such an inexpressible charm to our belief, and makes us love to sing:

I'm washed in the Blood of the Lamb! I am.  
I'm washed in the Blood of the Lamb! I am.  
You all may be free,  
And as happy as me,  
If you're washed in the Blood of the Lamb!

And the realization of which, whether the song be grammatical or not, yields an unutterable satisfaction.



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This personal experience of Salvation has much to do with the desire of the true Salvationist, that the benefits brought to us by the sacrifice of the cross may swell and spread until the knowledge of the Lord covers the earth as the waters cover the sea.

It lays on our hearts the obligation to proclaim to the sons and daughters of men, so far as we have opportunity, the virtue and value of Christ's Blood.

It makes us feel like the man who said, 'Were the highest hills my platform, and had I a voice as loud as the trumpet of doom, I would sound throughout Jehovah's boundless empire the glorious truth, that Jesus shed His Blood for all mankind.'

Now, this doctrine, which is one of the foundation truth of The Salvation Army, is, I fear, only faintly understood and feebly grasped, and therefor imperfectly proclaimed at the present day.

On this subject, however, the trumpets of many leaders of God's professed people are, I fear, giving a very uncertain sound. The Blood of Christ is not too often mentioned by them; and, when it is, only in a questioning spirit, and with bated breath. Others, supposed to be sound in the faith, have, of late, taken an open stand against the doctrine of the Atonement of Christ, disowning it altogether; and I fancy that even with some of our own Soldiers a clear perception of the virtue of the Blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, and a simple reliance on its cleansing power is not as definite and vigorous as it ought to be.

Can I discover the why and wherefore of this?

I. —The first reason for this feeble faith is probably traceable to ignorance, or to some mistaken notion about the subject.

Let me try and give what seems to me to be a correct view of the Atonement of our Lord, and the benefits that flow out of it.

1. When we say that the Blood of Christ cleanses from sin, we do not mean that the actual Blood shed by the Saviour on the cross is applied to the hearts of those who trust in Him.



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That would be an impossibility, seeing that the Precious Blood shed upon the hill called Calvary, nearly two thousand years ago, has long since mingled with the dust of the earth, or otherwise passed away.

2. Nor do we mean that Jesus Christ's Blood atoned for our sins, in the sense that He suffered all the punishment legally due to us on their account.

3. Neither do we teach, as is sometimes represented, that Jesus Christ by His sacrifice on the cross paid all the debt we owed to Eternal Justice by our transgressions. If that were so, we should all be free from condemnation and punishment, whether we claimed the benefits bought for us by His suffering or not.

4. Nor, yet again, do we mean that Christ's death has brought us into any such state as makes it impossible for those once saved to fall from grace, and be finally lost, no matter what they believe, or how they act.

5. But we do mean that Jesus Christ, by the grace of God, did actually offer on Mount Calvary, for the sins of the world, such a sacrifice as made it possible for God, consistent with the honour of His law, and the well-being of mankind, to pardon, sanctify, and glorify every man who sincerely turn to Him in repentance, obedience, and faith.

II. —A further reason why many people do not believe the doctrine of Christ's sacrifice is that they have no satisfactory experience in their own hearts of the benefits it was intended to secure.

They do not realize that the record of their sins has been washed away by the precious Stream that flowed from the Saviour's riven side.

Why is this? How is it that they are without this satisfying realization? Is it because they are overlooked and forgotten, and so left outside the multitude redeemed by that wonderful Blood? Certainly not, for by the grace of God, as the Bible informs us, Jesus Christ tasted death for every man, and so brought Salvation within the reach of every human being. But if those for whom the



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benefits of this Atonement have been provided are without this enjoyment, it is simply because they refuse compliance with the conditions on which alone those benefits can be received.

Jesus Christ may leave Heaven, and come down to the stable, the manger, the wilderness, and a life of suffering and scorn: Jesus Christ may agonize in the Garden, be condemned at Pilate's bar, and break His heart upon the cross: Jesus Christ may go down into the darkness of the grave, intercede at the right hand of the Father, and, by His Spirit, knock at the door of their hearts, pleading for admission; but they will not consider His claims or consent to give up their sins, or cast themselves on His mercy, and believe unto the enjoyment of His Salvation. They will not humble themselves to acknowledge Him before men, or deny themselves by hearing His Cross, or fighting for His cause.

What is your experience, my Comrades, with regard to the Blood? Are you walking in the Light? Surely you are not amongst the thankless crowd for whom that Blood has been shed in vain! Have you torn your idols from your hearts, and washed your every sin away in the Precious Blood? If not, 'Now is the accepted time; now is the day of Salvation.' If you will but repent and believe, you shall see the Salvation of God.

Your affectionate General,  
William Booth.