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Text: 1 Peter 1:18-19.

Intro.—Peter was probably an old man when he wrote these words. He had seen much of the world in which he lived, and had had abundant opportunities to learn the true worth of things.

Subject: THE PRECIOUS BLOOD OF CHRIST.

It had not been ever thus with Peter, when the Lord began to show unto His disciples that He must suffer and be killed, the thought was repellant to Peter. Pride ruled his heart. His hatred of this teaching was satanic. He had to be converted.

I.—He institutes a Comparison to Show its Preciousness.—Ye were redeemed, not with silver and gold, but with precious blood. The Bible speaks of many things as being precious: God's loving kindness (Ps. 37:6) God's thoughts (Ps. 139:17) the death of the saints (Ps. 116:15) we read also in Peter's epistle about "precious faith" and "precious promises," but the preciousness of all these precious things is based upon "the precious blood of Christ"—"the blood of the eternal covenant."

1. The word "precious" is used of things which are rare; of things which have intrinsic excellence; of things which are costly; perfection is another test of preciousness, purity is another; durability another. In our text the blood of Christ is put in favorable comparison with two of our most precious metals. Gold and silver will purchase anything that is salable in the world. They are comparatively rare, and have intrinsic value. In the fire they can be made purer than other metals. They are more enduring; rust does not corrupt them, and use does not easily impair their worth. They are most costly, and for their possession men will sacrifice even life itself. But this word "precious" reaches its highest use when it is applied to the blood of Christ. "Knowing that ye were redeemed, etc."

2. Its Preciousness is Unique.—It has peculiar intrinsic value. Its value is in itself alone, not in anything associated with it. If to it were added everything in the world its value would not be increased. Nor can its worth be in the least diminished by any possible subtraction. Use has no effect upon its value. The silver coin becomes smooth and loses most of its value by the wear and tear of use. The wedding ring becomes thinner the longer it is worn, and finally breaks in pieces and can be worn no more. But the blood of Christ will have the same priceless value in the "ages to come" as it has had "from the foundation of the world," and will be as precious when the last saint has in it "washed his robe" as when it saved righteous Abel.

Is rarity a quality of preciousness? The blood of Christ has no equal. The blood of patriots and martyrs has flowed in rivers over battlefield and execution block. Its value has been recognized by both church and state. But the blood of Christ is uniquely rare. There is none like it. It "speaketh better things than that of Abel," the proto-martyr, or of all the martyrs and patriots of the world.

It is pure blood. Absolute purity can be predicated of no other. "The best blood" of man is tainted and needs cleansing. This blood is without taint. It is the blood of one who was "without spot or blemish;" who was "holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners;" "in Him was no sin, He did no sin, and no guile was in His mouth." It is holy blood. It flowed from the throbbing heart of a holy body. It is the blood, not of man only, but of the God-man. God who "became flesh." Son of man He verily is, else He could not have shed human blood for human guilt. But that body in which He "bare our sins on the tree" was begotten by the Holy Spirit and was called by the Angel Gabriel "the holy thing." The blood of Christ is human, but it is more than human blood. It is therefore called by inspiration "the blood of God." Were it less it could not propitiate; it could not redeem; it could not save. If all the holy angels were to take human bodies and pour out their blood in awful sacrifice for human guilt it would fall short of what is due Eternal Righteousness; the Redemption price would not be half paid. Nothing but Divine-human blood could pay the price of sin. Jesus Christ brings blood which is essentially Divine, and perfectly human and holy.

II.—In Its Resultant Power we will best understand the preciousness of the blood of Christ. "Ye were redeemed, etc." There are three things especially through which God manifests the omnipotence of

His saving grace: "The word of God," which is "living and active"; "Spirit and life"; "The prayer of faith" by which "all things are possible"; and "The blood of Jesus Christ His son," which "cleanseth from all sin." But without the blood of Christ the word of God would speak to us in vain, and the prayer of faith would be impossible. Come then and consider the marvelous power, the inestimable value, the glorious results of Jesus' blood. 1. It is God's remedy for sin. Whom God set forth to be a propitiation . . . in His blood." The universal belief among men has ever been that blood alone could atone for sin. Emphatic witness is borne to this by every nation from the remotest antiquity. It would seem that there has ever been an instinct in man that led him to believe that the righteousness of God required the sacrifice of the innocent in order to put away the sins of the guilty. Behold all the religions of the old pagan world, and what is the sight that invariably meets the eye? The white-robed priest and the smoking altar, the costly sacrifice and the flowing blood. "A ghastly sight!" Yes; but it is the solemn testimony of man to a conviction of sin's exceeding sinfulness, and of his belief that he must have a sacrificial substitute in order to escape the penalty of violated moral law. "A superstition!" But why did the superstition always take on this form? What was it that kept whispering in the ears of so many men so remote from each other that life in some animate form was the only expiation for sin against God? Many of the superstitions of human religion may be traced ultimately to a Divine revelation. The heathen conception of atonement by blood could never have been solved by the human mind. The only solution is that it came from God, who, in the earliest history of our sinful race, made known to man that "without the shedding of blood there is no remission." Ancient Babylon introduces us to the satanic corruption of this Divine revelation, and from this cradle of our race the corrupted truth has spread.

As we enter the courts of Holy Scripture this truth everywhere faces us. The blood of the innocent is shed to provide God's gracious covering for the first guilty pair, and they go forth from Eden wearing this token of Divine substitution with the primeval gospel sounding in their ears: "The seed of woman shall bruise the serpent's head, but it shall bruise his heel." Abel appears before God with the firstlings of his flock and is accepted in the blood of the lamb. Cain comes without blood and is rejected. And from this on through the Old Testament you meet altars and dying victims on every hand. The stream of blood that rises in Genesis flows without ebb through to the Revelation, where we behold "in the midst of the Throne, a Lamb as though it had been slain." The tabernacle, the altar, the veil, the holy place, the mercy-seat, the priests, the people—all are sprinkled with blood. What means this system of sacrifices and ceremonies without which no worshipper could approach the thrice Holy God? This: Sinful man can come into God's presence with acceptance only through the shedding of innocent blood on his behalf. Let Isaiah tell us its meaning while in prophetic vision he beholds the suffering Servant of Jehovah: "He was wounded for our transgression, He was bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed. . . . It pleased Jehovah to bruise Him . . . to put Him to grief. . . . to make His soul an offering for sin. . . . By the knowledge of Himself shall my righteous servant justify many; and He shall bear their iniquities." Now let the Servant Himself, when He appears, tell us: "The Son of Man came not to be ministered unto but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many." "This is my blood of the new Covenant shed for many unto remission of sins." Listen to His inspired apostles while they give in their answers: Paul says: "Christ died for our sins," "One died for all." "Being justified by His blood we shall be saved from wrath through Him." "Him who knew no sin God made to be sin for us that we might become the righteousness of God in Him." He "redeemed us from the curse of the law having become a curse for us." "In whom we have our redemption through His blood." John says: "He is the propitiation for our sins, and . . . for the sins of the whole world." And he heard them singing in heaven this new song: "Thou wast slain and didst purchase unto God with Thy blood men of every . . . nation." Peter says: "Who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree." "Christ suffered for sins once, the Righteous for the unrighteous to bring us to God." "Knowing that ye were redeemed . . . with the precious blood of Christ." Notice that in all these scriptures it is not simply the life, but the death of Christ—and not death merely, but the shedding of the blood of Christ that avails. The shed blood establishes the fact that His death was propitiatory. This view of Christ's death gives significance to "all the blood of beasts on Jewish altars slain;" which otherwise had been a shameful waste of innocent blood; and then Gethsemane and Calvary would be meaningless, and such scriptures as those just quoted would be a mere jargon of words. But now we see how plainly the Old Testament sacrifices were "the pattern of things in heaven" and foretold of Him of whom John the Baptist said: "Behold the Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world."

2. God had two ways to deal with sin, which He hates, and which defiles His world. He could have swept it away as the state stamps out the cattle plague—kill off every one infected with it. That would have emptied this world and God would have lost entirely the creature made in His image. The other plan was: Not to slight sin, or condone it in the least, but to make an expiation for it that would meet the demands of perfect justice and magnify His law; and that would also have in it the power to heal the malady, and win back to absolute loyalty His rebellious creatures. This latter plan He adopted. And while into all the mystery of the atonement it is impossible for us to penetrate yet this at least is plain; that apart from the vicarious sufferings of Jesus Christ upon the cross there is no reconciliation for man with God, and no cure for the malady of sin in the human soul. Thus we can see how very precious the blood of Christ must be. "He that despised Moses law died without compassion on the word of two or three witnesses; of how much sorer punishment think ye shall he be judged worthy who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant wherewith He was sanctified an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto to the spirit of grace." If any in the madness of unbelief reject the atonement made by the blood of Christ, "there is no more a sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and fierceness of fire which shall devour the adversaries."

III.—Every Blessing connected with Salvation is distinctly attributed to the Blood of Christ. We can note only a few of them. 1.—Redemption is named in our text: "Redeemed by the precious blood of Christ." "In whom we have our redemption by His blood." "Christ gave Himself a ransom for all." We belong to a redeemed race. The majority of mankind do not know it. Many who do know it sell their birthright for a mess of pottage. Blessed are they who have hidden in their hearts the fact of their redemption for to them it becomes a governing principle of life emancipating them from "the vain manner of life". All life is vanity until it comes in touch with the passion of Christ. The cost of our redemption has been immense. God could have given constellations of silver and globes of gold, but we could not be "redeemed with corruptible things, with silver and gold," but only "with the precious blood of Christ." "The blood is the life." Life is man's supreme possession, and God's supreme gift. To give up anything less than life is to fall short of the completest sacrifice. Nothing but the completest sacrifice, the blood of Christ, could redeem us. We sold ourselves for naught, and Christ hath redeemed us "at such tremendous cost." What a great responsibility is on every man! "Ye are not your own, ye are bought with a price"—body, soul, and spirit—to glorify God? "What a blessed sense of security is given to him who gives due recognition to this responsibility. "I am God's property. He is able to keep His own. No one can pluck me out of His hand, who purchased me with His own blood." "I am persuaded that neither life, nor death etc, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus the Lord."

2. Justification and Forgiveness. "In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins." "Much more now being justified by His blood." Forgiveness of sins is not something that we have either to wait for or to work for. The believer on Jesus has it now. "We have, through His blood, the forgiveness of sins." The blood of Jesus secures it for us. We can "get right with God" at once, "through faith in His blood." We are "justified in the blood of Jesus." The extent and continuance of this judicial cleansing are wonderfully set forth in 1 John 1:7. "If we walk in the light, etc. Notice especially the two words "all" and "cleanseth" in this verse. "All sin," not "some sin." The blood of Jesus has power to cleanse from all sin, and is cleansing those who "walk in the light as He is in the light." The blood of Christ once shed, eternally availing, is continuously at work, not only for "the brother overtaken in a fault," but for the Christian walking in the light as God in the light. "Cleanseth," shows not only a continuous process, but also a continuous need. And the process is not "keeping clean," but "cleansing." There is something to be cleansed, or the cleansing would cease of course. But how blessedly reassuring is this word. We are invited to "walk in the light as He is in the light without fear that the discoveries which that light will make, either of self or of God, will rob us of our peace or hope. No; we will understand more deeply than ever the need and the power of Jesus blood. "The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin."

"Bearing shame and scoffing rude
"In my place condemned He stood
"Seals my pardon in His blood
"Hallelujah! What a Saviour!"

3. Peace is secured to us by the blood of Christ. "Having made peace by the blood of His cross." When the law thunders, and conscience quakes, and the sinner stands self-condemned before the Holy God, nothing but the blood of Christ can hush those thunders, or still those fears. "Being justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." "The Lord hath made to light on Him the

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