

H Y M N S

- 1 As we're sharing of the cup,
How can we restrain our praise;
For the blood Thou shedd'st for us,
Worth of which none can appraise.
O how precious is Thy blood!
All our problems it resolves;
In Thine efficacious blood
All our care and fear dissolves.
- 2 It is by this blood of worth
The new testament was made;
For this better covenant,
'Tis a sure foundation laid.
We have been redeemed by God,
Not with silver or with gold,
But, Lord, with Thy precious blood,
Which Thy love doth e'er unfold.
- 3 For remission of our sins
Thou hast shed Thy cleansing blood,
Which for us has fully met
All the righteous claims of God.
Thou hast washed us from our sins
In Thy pow'rful purging blood;
And our conscience purged by it,
Thus to serve the living God.
- 4 By Thy separating blood,
We have all been sanctified;
'Tis by Thy preserving blood
Holiness is testified.
By Thy propitiating blood,
We have all been justified;
'Tis by Thy redeeming blood
God is fully satisfied.
- 5 Thru Thy blood shed on the cross,
We are reconciled to God,
That the way to contact Him
May in peace by us be trod.
By partaking of Thy blood,
We have Thine eternal life;
In Thy blood and life received,
We have rest, free from all strife.
- 6 Now, in heav'n Thy sprinkled blood
Speaks for us of better things;
Under its defending pow'r
We are kept from Satan's stings.
By Thine overcoming blood,
We defeat the enemy;
Over our accuser thus,
We will have the victory.
- 7 Of Thy blood, for fellowship,
We commune with all Thy saints;
Under its full covering,
Our freed spirit never faints.
How can we exhaust, in words,
The account of Thy dear blood;
We will need eternity
To declare its boundless good.

Concerning the Worth, Preciousness, and Power of Christ's Blood

A major characteristic of the early Christian meetings was the reliance not only on the Scriptures but also on hymns to give expression and meaning to their faith. Hymns, through poetic imagery, provide an abundant and full expression of the truths found in the Word of God. The better hymns not only stir our emotions, but they renew our minds with divine and heavenly concepts and nourish our spirits with the living word of God. Hence, the best hymns are full of scriptural references quoted either directly or in paraphrase. When we read or sing such hymns, we are filled with appreciation for the exhaustless riches of Christ in His person and His accomplishments. Colossians 3:16 speaks of letting "the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom." In the context of this verse, it is clear that the rich indwelling of the word comes through our mutual enjoyment of psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs. In this portion of *A & C* we search into the rich heritage of the church found in her hymns with the goal that we Christians may gain a new appreciation for these hymns, enjoy their abounding wealth, and learn to speak them to one another for our mutual teaching, admonition, and encouragement.

The hymn that we consider in this issue explores the manifold significances of the blood of Christ. God, in His entire speaking in both the Old and New Testaments, has given a unique place to the blood in the accomplishment and application of God's eternal salvation. Most believers are familiar with the blood as the power of redemption, but few of us have ever considered the many other aspects of the riches of God's complete salvation made available to us through the blood. This hymn, written by Witness Lee, is a celebration of Christ's accomplishments through the shedding of His blood. It is especially appropriate for us to enjoy whenever we fellowship around the Lord's table in remembrance of Him.

Bursting forth with joyful acclamation, stanza 1 exclaims, "How can we restrain our praise." The feeling of the author is that we can never fully appraise the magnitude of the blood's preciousness, worth, and efficaciousness. Through the precious blood all of our problems are resolved and all of our care and fear dissolve. The blood of the Lamb is God's eternal answer to all the needs of man; through the blood, man is qualified for and ushered into the presence of God on His throne. By the sprinkling of the Lamb's blood, the throne of God's authority becomes the throne of His grace, where we fellowship with God and all our problems are resolved.

Stanza 2 declares that this blood of worth is the foundation of the new covenant and the producing power of the new testament. In Hebrews 13:20 the blood of Christ is called the blood of an eternal covenant. The

eternal covenant is the new and better covenant (Heb. 8:6, 8, 13) which was enacted with Christ's blood. Through this new covenant, better than the covenant God made with the children of Israel, we the redeemed and regenerated believers receive the manifold blessings of the age of grace. The sure foundation for this covenant is the precious blood, of which Peter wrote: "Knowing that it was not with corruptible things, with silver or gold, that you were redeemed from your vain manner of life,...but with precious blood, as of a Lamb without blemish and without spot, the blood of Christ" (1 Pet. 1:18-19).

Further, the shed blood of the Lamb ever unfolds the expansiveness of God's redeeming love to all sinners throughout all generations (John 3:16; Gal. 2:20). The love of the Triune God is an incomprehensible love (Eph. 3:19): He gave Himself up for us, even becoming sin and a curse for us. Small wonder that Paul would declare, "The love of Christ constrains us because we have judged this, that One died for all, therefore all died; and He died for all that those who live may no longer live to themselves but to Him who died for them" (2 Cor. 5:14-15). The new song in eternity will be of Him who by His blood purchased for God men out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation (Rev. 5:9). Hence, He is given glory forever and ever as "Him who loves us and has released us from our sins by His blood" (1:5).

Throughout the remaining stanzas of the hymn, the far-reaching blessings secured for us through the blood are detailed in point after amazing point: The blood, cleansing us for the remission of our sins, meets all the righteous claims of God. ♦ The powerful, conscience-purging blood releases us from dead works that we might serve the living God. ♦ The separating blood sanctifies us to God from all that is not God and preserves us for God. ♦ The propitiating blood gives God the base by which He is righteous in justifying us. ♦ The blood shed on the cross reconciles us to God and makes a way of peace with God for us to contact Him. ♦ By partaking of His blood, as John 6:54 says, we have His eternal life. ♦ The sprinkled blood speaks to God of redemption, forgiveness, justification, and reconciliation, better things than what the blood of Abel speaks, which are accusation and vengeance. ♦ The overcoming blood is the defending power to keep us from the stings of Satan, providing us with the sure way to defeat the enemy and giving us the victory over our accuser. ♦ The blood washes us for fellowship and is the essential means for us to commune with all His saints. ♦ The full covering of the blood frees our spirit from all accusation and makes it buoyant, so that it never faints.

Among these many wonderful credentials of the Lamb's shed blood, we can summarize particularly the following three major aspects. First, there is what the blood has accomplished for God—God is propitiated in relation to us. Sin elicits a reaction from God. Sin, being disobedience to God and raising up rebellion and opposition to God, requires God in His righteousness to deal with the offending sinners. Without the redeeming blood, God has no choice but to condemn and pour out His wrath upon all sinners (John 3:18, 36). But, praise the Lord, God has set forth Christ "as a propitiation place through faith in His blood...with a view to the demonstrating of His righteousness in the present time, so that He might be righteous and the One who justifies him who is of the faith of Jesus" (Rom. 3:25-26). Through the blood, God is able not only to forgive sinners but to justify them, even constituting them to be "the righteousness of God in Him" (2 Cor. 5:21).

God's righteous requirements are fully satisfied, and because He is propitiated, He is able to invite His redeemed into intimate fellowship with Him.

Second, there is what the blood has accomplished for us—we are reconciled to God and to one another. Sin constituted us not only sinners but even enemies of God (Rom. 5:10). We were also at odds with one another; there was no peace. The blood has brought us near to God (Eph. 2:13) and reconciled us to Him, making peace (Col. 1:20). The blood purges our conscience from dead works (Heb. 9:14) and through the cleansing of our conscience gives us boldness for entering into the presence of God in full assurance of faith (10:19-22). It sanctifies us to God, making us qualified to enter into the Holy of Holies, where we enjoy intimate fellowship with Him (13:12; 10:19). Through participating in the Lord's blood, we receive Him as life (John 6:54) and are not only brought near to God but are also made one with Him in life. We have also been made one with one another (1 Cor. 10:17). Hence, through the blood of Jesus, we have fellowship with God and with one another (1 John 1:7).

Finally, there is what the blood accomplished relative to Satan—he has been defeated and overcome because of the blood of the Lamb. Through the fall of man Satan gained a usurping hold on all men. He held the might of death and, through fear of death, bound men in slavery all of their lives (Heb. 2:14-15). But the Lord Jesus, through His death on the cross, destroyed the Devil and delivered all of His chosen and redeemed ones. Yet the enemy still walks about as a roaring lion seeking someone to devour (1 Pet. 5:8). It is through the blood of the Lamb that the faithful believers withstand Satan and overcome his accusations (Rev. 12:10-11) until he is eternally cast down.

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by Gary Kaiser