

“MADE NIGH IN THE BLOOD OF JESUS”

by Tom Wacaster

I have been profitably engaged in a study of the book of Ephesians with the determination that I shall, in the very near future, submit my notes to the printer for publication. The book of Ephesians is a wonderful treatise on the church of Jesus Christ. There is a fine thread that runs through this epistle that is set forth in the first part of this letter, and upon which our attention is focused time and again. Succinctly stated, it is the amazing truth that *“now in Christ Jesus ye that once were far off are made nigh in the blood of Christ”* (Eph. 2:13) It is the last seven words upon which I want to focus your attention in this week’s “Tom’s Pen.”

A glorious hope is held out to the recipients of this letter. Yes, at one time they were “alienated from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenant of his promise, having no hope and without God in the world” (2:12). “But now...” – NOW – as members of the body of Christ their hopelessness and despair has been washed away. NOW – they no longer stand far off, but near to God and His Son. NOW – they are “in Christ,” and in fellowship with the Father. NOW – they have access to every spiritual blessing (1:3). What a contrast! How can any Christian read these beautiful words and fail to bow in humble appreciation for having been cleansed. The word “nigh” could mean near in time or near in distance. Here the apostle is expressing, not physical distance, but spiritual distance. Paul sets forth a contrast between their former state where they were “without God, having no hope” and their present state wherein they enjoyed fellowship with the Father. They were made “nigh” in that they were now permitted to draw near to God; and that because of the blood of Christ!

The blood of Jesus is the ransom for souls in bondage to sin. Without the blood there could be no redemption (cf. 1 Pet. 1:18-19). The late Robert Ingersol was fond of referring to Christianity as “blood religion.” Although he said this in derision, it is true that Christianity IS blood religion. You cannot separate the blood of Christ from the preaching of the gospel. Why should this surprise us? If men will look at history they will notice that every upward movement in the history of the world is a movement that is paved with blood. It is because that in the shedding of blood we see the greatest devotion and love a man might have for another, whether it be love for God or love for one’s fellow man. We call this vicarious suffering. Some years back we filed the following. We do not know the author, but we share it with our readers because of the force of its message:

This principle of vicarious suffering is the foundation upon which civilization has been built – in fact upon which all society has been built, civilized or uncivilized. It is also the essential principle of human progress towards that one, far-off event, towards which the whole creation moves. Not so many years ago there went forth from our homes thousands of fine young men. They crossed the rolling deep and pitched their tents on Flanders fields and in the valleys of the Argonne. When they started out, many thought it would be a lark. But the poetry of war soon vanished, and nothing was left but the prose. They lived in dug-outs. They marched and ate and slept in mud. They rushed into living hells. They had ribs fractured, eyes put out, lungs filled with gas, limbs shot away. Thousand cried for water as they lay dying on the battlefields, and received it not. They were cold and weary and homesick. No one but Almighty God knows the length and breadth and depth of the awful anguish and suffering of those who fought, bled and died on those European battlefields. Why did fathers leave their homes and go to the front? Why did young men, postponing the day of marriage, press the last, long, lingering kisses upon the lips of the sweethearts, and then rush away into war with its uncertain future? I am still convinced that they died for a principle. I refuse to believe that it was all in vain – that a sacrifice is ever in vain. There may have been greed, graft and corruption mixed up with all of it, but there was nobility, too! Autocracy had to be overthrown, lest our own wives and daughters might have to suffer what the innocent women and children of Belgium and France suffered. The war had its sordid side, of course; but surely all this bloodshed was not meaningless! A thousand times; yea, ten thousand times – no! I still believe that these men suffered to advance the cause of democracy and freedom.

As for me I glory in the crimson line. I am thrilled when I read its suggestive meaning in the cup of the Lord's Supper. I am moved with an unexplainable ecstasy when I see the ancient altars dripping with the blood of the slain lambs. Now I understand why the destroying angel who passed over Egypt at the hour of midnight, passed over those houses where the blood was sprinkled on the door-post. Now, I know to whom Isaiah refers, when he writes of One "in red apparel coming in dyed garments"; whom John the Revelator refers to, when he describes that heavenly chieftain whose vesture was dipped in blood; what Simon Peter means when he writes of that precious blood which cleanseth from all sin; and what the writer of our text has in mind when he declares that "apart from shedding of blood there is no remission." I want to say to you, with all the power of emphasis and persuasion of which I am capable, that by the precious blood of Jesus you will be saved, or you will never be saved at all. In all ages God has never pardoned a single sin-sick soul except on the merits of our Savior's precious blood, and He never will. That lonely hill back of Jerusalem was the battleground of which the Prince of heaven fought with the powers of darkness, and won. There God turned an evil thing into a channel of blessing. There, Sin, in slaying the Son of God, slew itself.

Were it not for the blood of Jesus, we could never draw near to God the Father, nor would we possess any hope of that heavenly home prepared for the redeemed of every age. Thank God for the blood of Jesus our Lord!