

doctrine of Atonement) we refer to a passage in the Epistle of Ignatius to the Ephesians (ch. xix.), a passage not found in one of the Syriac MSS., on which we are thankful to quote from the valuable note of Bishop Lightfoot, "It is not the fact of the death, but the significance and effects of the death, to which Ignatius refers. The prince of this world instigated the death of Christ, not knowing that it was ordained to be the life of mankind. Thus the deceiver was himself deceived. . . . Indeed, the mention of the 'Death of Christ' is required by the context. Here, as elsewhere in Ignatius, the *πάθος* is the centre round which his thoughts revolve. The Incarnation has its importance mainly in the fact that it leads up to the Passion. It is only the *beginning* of the end. The whole passage opens and closes with the death of Christ" (vol. ii. § 1, pp. 77, 78). The importance of this in its bearing on some present matters of controversy is obvious.

We can but, in conclusion, express our deep sense of the value of Bishop Lightfoot's labours, and of the debt which the Church of England owes to him for his edition of the Apostolic Fathers.

#### AN ENGLISH PRESBYTER.



#### ART. II.—I JOHN i. 7.

*"And the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin."*

MY purpose is not at all to discuss or expound the general context of this clause, a passage precious indeed to the Scripture student who studies that he may not only solve expository problems, but may know Christ and be found in Him. My concern in this brief essay is with the precise bearing of the words of the clause I quote. Some reference to the general context will doubtless be called for as we proceed; but it will be incidental only.

May this, as every study in the heavenly Word, be carried through as before Him with Whose Name it is concerned. Let us never suppose that the exegetical and the devotional can be safely separated, when the exegesis is of the Word of God.

The thesis, so to speak, which I seek to establish is that the words quoted have a reference, direct and single, to the Lord's atoning and propitiatory work; to "His meritorious cross and passion." I hold that they refer to the "purging of iniquity" by "sacrifice and offering" (1 Sam. iii. 14), the "cleansing" of

the guilty from the point of view of law, because of a sacrificial death. I hold that the words do not refer to subjective results within the believer; and, in particular, not to results of vivifying and energizing infusion, as of the Lord's life-power liberated, as it were, by death,<sup>1</sup> a life-power whose presence and action sanctifies, purifies, clarifies the Christian's whole moral condition. I hold it to be a phrase whose concern is altogether with the atoning sacrifice, the propitiation for our sins, once offered, continuously availing; not *in* the believer, but *for* him before God.

Need I say that in thus explaining the passage I do not ignore, or explain away, or deny, the truths which have been, as I think, imported into it? Divinely true it is that the Life of the exalted Head flows to and through His believing members, united to Him by the Holy Spirit, τὸ κύριον, τὸ ζωοποιόν, the Spirit of Life; and that this mighty Gift was, from the point of view of history and accomplished fact, dependent on, and in that sense certainly subsequent to, the Lord's death and resurrection. Reverent jealousy for that great characteristic and stumbling-block (never more so than now) of the Gospel, propitiation for the guilty, must never lead us to a forgetfulness or denial of such a treasure of the inmost sanctuary as this; a treasure meant to be every day coined into the current gold of the believer's life and walk. Thank God, the Scriptures overflow with statements, and illustrations, and applications, of this divine mystery and certainty.

My contention is that this passage, however, looks another way; that it means very directly, simply, and singly, the believer's shelter, daily and hourly, within the sprinkling of the propitiatory blood, within the application of the merits of the atoning death.

Let me deal with the subject, first, by a study of the phraseology of the clause itself; then by a brief comment on its connection.

I. *The blood of Jesus Christ.* What is the reference of these most holy words in other New Testament passages? I subjoin a *catena*, complete, as I believe, of passages which mention the holy Blood.

Matt. xxvi. 28. *This is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.*

Cf. Mark xiv. 24; Luke xxii. 20; 1 Cor. xi. 25; in all which occurs the significant word διαθήκη.

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<sup>1</sup> It is thus, I think, that the view stated and defended by Professor Westcott *in loco* (to refer by name, as is his due, to an expositor of such eminence) may be fairly summed up. See his Commentary on the Epistle, pp. 34-37.

John vi. 53-56. *Except ye . . . drink the blood of the Son of Man, ye have no life in you. Whoso . . . drinketh My blood hath eternal life. . . . My blood is drink indeed. He that . . . drinketh My blood hath eternal life.*

In this passage I have, for brevity, omitted the words concerning the Lord's flesh. But it is observable that the flesh and the blood are always mentioned here side by side, and always separately. And the importance of this is that it points to ideas of death; of a state of things in which flesh and blood are both in view, but sundered. Accordingly the blood is not *sanguis* but *cruor* in its idea; it is blood of death, not of life; not the current as in the veins, but the effusion as at the altar.

Acts xx. 28. *Feed the Church of God, which He purchased (περιποιήσατο) by means of His own blood.*

Rom. iii. 25. *The redemption that is in Christ Jesus, Whom God set forth as a propitiation through faith in His blood.*

Here I am aware that the translation of *ἰλαστήριον*, and the grammatical connection of *ἐν τῷ αἵματι αὐτοῦ*, have been disputed. But it is enough for me to remark that the context of "His blood" is in any case one of redemption, release by accepted sacrifice.

Rom. v. 9. *Being justified in His blood.*

1 Cor. x. 16. *The communion of the blood of Christ.*

1 Cor. xi. 27. *Guilty of the body and blood of the Lord.*

On the last two passages the remarks made just above on John vi. will be in point. Whatever be the "participation" and the "guilt," the "blood" is blood of death, blood parted from body; not in the veins, but on the altar.

Eph. i. 7. *We have redemption in His blood, even the remission of sins.*

Cf. Col. i. 7; but the words *ἐν τῷ αἵματι αὐτοῦ* there are probably imported, by early copyists, from here.

Eph. ii. 13. *Ye were made nigh in the blood of Christ.*

Cf. Col. i. 20: Having made peace in the blood of His Cross. The two passages are evidently parallel. And thus the blood is in both the blood of death, the *cruor* of sacrifice.

Heb. ix. 12. *By means of His own blood He entered in once into the holy place, having won (ἐξάμενος) eternal redemption.*

Heb. ix. 14. *The blood of Christ shall purge your conscience from dead works.*

The context makes it plain that *συνείδησις* in this great passage means, practically, the sense of the fact of

unpardoned sin ; of guilt. The "purging" correlative to this is sacrificial satisfaction. It is needless to point out in detail how rich is the whole chapter in teaching and suggestion in this direction.

Heb. x. 19. *Boldness to enter into the holiest by (lit. in) the blood of Jesus.*

Heb. x. 29. *The blood of the covenant in (by) which (blood) he was sanctified.*

In the Hebrews, the word "sanctify" keeps with great distinctness its proper meaning ; dedication, consecration, of the person. Cf. xiii. 12, an all-important passage in point.

Heb. xii. 24. *Ye are come . . . to the blood of sprinkling, which speaketh.*

Here is a distinct reference to the propitiatory, protective, efficacy of the blood of the Lamb.

Heb. xiii. 20. *The blood of the eternal covenant.*

1 Pet. i. 2. *Elect unto the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ.* See just above on Heb. xii. 24.

1 Pet. i. 19. *Redeemed . . . with the precious blood of Christ, as of a Lamb without blemish.*

1 John v. 6. *This is He that came by water and blood ; not in the water only, but in the water and the blood.*

1 John v. 8. *There are three that bear witness . . . the Spirit, and the water, and the blood.*

These two passages are doubtless not self-explanatory as many others are. But they therefore lend themselves as freely to an exposition consistent with the mass of others, as to any other.

Rev. i. 5. *To Him that . . . washed us (or, read perhaps with more certainty, "loosed us") from our sins in His blood.*

Rev. v. 9. *Thou wast slain, and didst purchase (men) to God in Thy blood.*

Rev. vii. 14. *They washed their robes . . . in the blood of the Lamb.*

Rev. xii. 11. *They overcame him, on account of the blood of the Lamb.*

In these Apocalyptic passages the holy blood is always seen (except in chap. i., which surely is to be explained by the other passages) as the blood of the Lamb. Its associations are altogether sacrificial.

All the New Testament passages in which the blood of Christ is spoken of, have now passed in review before us. Is it too much to say that the bearing of them is upon the whole decisively towards ideas not of life but death, not of infusion and suffusion, of a quickening and purifying current through the limbs of a living organism, but of effusion, of the blood of

death, of the striking of covenant, the propitiation wrought at an altar, the sprinkling of a mercy-seat, the lawful "purchase" from death, by death, of the "sons of death"? Is not the whole preponderance of this evidence accordingly for an interpretation of 1 John i. 7 in the same direction, and not in another?

But the Lord's blood is not the only key-word of this verse. We have others, in *cleanseth* and *sin*. And what I venture to assert is that these two words, or thoughts, *standing in one context with the word, or thought, of blood, of death, are things that attach themselves in Scripture usage to ideas of sacrificial, atoning, propitiatory "cleansing," not of the cleansing which has to do directly with purified motives, affections, will, internal state.*

I could hardly put the ground for such an assertion at once more concisely and more clearly than by referring again to Heb. ix. 22: "Almost all things by the law are cleansed in blood, and without shedding of blood is [by the law] no *remission*." True, the Old Testament, as well as the New, is full of precious utterances about a cleansing of heart, of motive, of will; about a purification which is in deed and in the inmost man subjective. But these utterances occur where there is no presence in the immediate context of words or thoughts which lend themselves to ideas of death, of blood. It is the co-ordination of the three things, *death (blood), cleansing, sin*, which fixes, as I believe, the reference, in such places, of the word "cleansing."

I may close this, the main section of my remarks, with a reference to one most important Old Testament passage. It is Lev. xvi. 30, where the principles and purpose of the great yearly Atonement of Israel are being summed up: "On that day shall the priest make an atonement for you" [in the Revised Version, "shall atonement be made for you"] "to cleanse you; that ye may be clean from all your sins before the Lord." In the LXX. the verse runs: *ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ ταύτῃ ἐξιλάσεται περὶ ὑμῶν, καθαρῖσαι ὑμᾶς ἀπὸ πάντων τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν ὑμῶν ἐναντὶ Κυρίου, καὶ καθαρῖσήσεσθε.* This is a close and impressive verbal parallel to 1 John i. 7 (and to ii. 2 in connection with it); and it is needless to point out in detail that it comes from a context quite full of ideas of sacerdotal, sacrificial expiation, and of them alone.

II. A few remarks on the context of the passage before us will supplement and close the inquiry. It is a context where ideas akin to the Atonement Day of old are apparent. Close to our verse is the reiterated injunction to confess sin. And just below, chap. ii. 1, 2, in intimate and continuous connection, appears the Figure of One Who is at once Advocate (Intercessor) and Propitiation. Here surely is at least a suggestion

of the bearing of the words which we have been discussing. Chap. ii. 2 at least disposes of the assertion, or assumption, which, strange to say, has been made, that "the idea of propitiation has passed *from the Epistle to the Hebrews* into modern theology." The Bishop of Derry, in the "Speaker's Commentary" here, quotes that sentence from Professor Jowett, and then justly remarks that "to *English-speaking* Christians, at least," the idea has come "exclusively from Romans iii. 15, and from St. John's Epistle," ii. 2, iv. 10.

I must not conclude without observing what is the positive teaching of this clause of 1 John i, 7, interpreted of the blood and the cleansing of propitiation. It is at once profoundly searching, and graciously reassuring, to the awakened conscience. It negatives tenderly, but decisively, the illusion of the Christian who believes himself to be, through grace, so pure subjectively as to be beyond confession of sin for himself. In effect it says: "The propitiation of the Cross, once offered, eternally availing, is continuously at work, and therefore *needs* to be continuously at work, not only for the believer 'taken in a fault,' but for the believer 'walking in the light, as God is in the light.'" On any interpretation, indeed, the clause negatives the illusion above described. For its *καθαρίζει* marks a continuous process, and therefore a continuous need. And that process is not "keeping clean," but "cleansing," a widely different matter. Whether the cleansing is propitiatory or internal, there is something to be cleansed away, or the cleansing would cease of course. But, let me repeat it, the phraseology points in the propitiatory direction, and this is a direction which the awakened conscience knows to be always one of peculiar and salutary humiliation.

But it is also graciously reassuring. It invites the believer, as he ponders the holy call to "walk in the light as He is in the light," to step into that photosphere, if I may say so, with humble cheerfulness and peace. Let him not fear that the discoveries which that Light will make, discoveries of self as well as of the Lord, shall be too much for his peace and hope. No; he shall understand more deeply than ever there both the need and the provision of the Atoning Sacrifice, the perpetual Efficacy (not the repetition) of the Propitiation. He shall see, among the revelations of that light, more fully, more perfectly than before, the reality, the glory, the fitness, the presentness of the Propitiation.

Meanwhile, delightful paradox, all these things are written to the "little children" of St. John, "that they sin not." Come, then, and "let us walk in the light of the Lord;" none the less, but the more, trustfully, expectantly, and at rest,

because—whether at any given moment we “feel” it or not—we know that we always have, as we always need, the blood of the Lamb of God, of the Son of God, our Propitiation, cleansing us from all sin.

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### ART. III.—CHRYSOSTOM AS AN INTERPRETER OF HOLY SCRIPTURE.

*Chrysostom, a Study in the History of Biblical Interpretation.* By FREDERICK HENRY CHASE, M.A., Christ's College, Theological Lecturer at Pembroke College, and Tutor of the Clergy Training School, Cambridge. Deighton, Bell, and Co. 1887.

IT is curious that the one Father whose name every Sunday-school child knows, and who alone out of all the Fathers is referred to in the margin of the Authorized Version (Acts xiii. 18), should be so little read by us English Churchmen. Augustine is far more often studied and referred to. There are, no doubt, reasons for this. The influence that Augustine has had upon the whole realm of Western theology has made us insensibly have much in common with his writings. We know not why, but we feel as we read them that the thoughts are like our own; we can understand them and appreciate them. And there are deeper reasons than Augustine's influence upon the Western Church generally. For to his teachings of the relation of the individual soul to sin and to God the Protestant Church owes almost its very existence, if, as Melancthon tells us, it was the study of St. Augustine that under God led Luther to accept the doctrine of Justification by Faith. We cannot imagine that Luther would ever have arrived at the same clear understanding of this vital truth from the study of Chrysostom. For Chrysostom had never passed through such a crisis as Augustine passed and as Luther passed in his turn. Chrysostom's views alike of sin in its extent and depth and of the freeness with which God forgives the sinner are far less decided than Augustine's. Chrysostom does not commend himself so easily as Augustine to the man who is convicted of sin and who is seeking a guide to the truth. Nor, we must add, does he commend himself so easily as Augustine to those among us who like to see sharp dogmatic statements of the unity and catholicity of the Church. Though his statements about the Lord's Supper verge on the blasphemous—so strong a belief has he in what is called the Real Presence—yet he had no Donatist schism to contend with and to draw out a dogmatic exposition