

J. C. Ryle Tracts

These tracts are classics of Gospel Truth that readers of J. C. Ryle have come to expect from all his writings. His tracts are "pure gold." Many of these tracts, not published since the 19th Century, have come into my possession, and I offer you some of these inspiring works exactly word for word as they were first published by Drummond's Tract Depot, Stirling, Scotland.

THE substance of this paper was preached as a sermon at the Chapel Royal, St. James's, London, on March 2, 1884.

"One Blood"

"One blood"—ACTS XVII. 26.

THIS is a very short and simple text, and even a child knows the meaning of its words. But simple as it is, it supplies food for much thought and it forms part of a speech delivered by a great man on a great occasion.

The speaker is the Apostle of the Gentiles, St. Paul. The hearers are the cultivated men of Athens, and specially the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers. The place is Mars' Hill at Athens, in full view of religious buildings and statues, of which even the shattered remains are a marvel of art at this day. Never perhaps were such a place, such a man, and such an audience brought together! It was a strange scene. And how did St. Paul use the occasion? What did this Jewish stranger, this member of a despised nation, this little man, whose "bodily presence was weak," and very unlike the ideal figure in one of Raphael's cartoons, coming from an obscure corner of Asia, what does he say to these intellectual Greeks?

He tells them boldly the unity of the true God. There is only one God, the maker of heaven and earth,—and not many deities, as his hearers seemed to think,—a God who needed no temples made with hands, and was not to be represented by images made of wood or metal or stone. Standing in front of the stately Parthenon and the splendid statue of Minerva, he sets before his refined hearers the ignorance with which they worshipped, the folly of idolatry, the coming judgment of all mankind, the certainty of a resurrection, and the absolute need of repentance. And not least, he tells the proud men of Athens that they must not flatter themselves that they were superior beings, as they vainly supposed, made of finer clay, and needing less than other races of men. No! he declares that "God has made of one blood all nations." There is no difference. The nature, the needs, the obligation to God of all human beings on the globe are one and the same.

I shall stick to that expression "one blood," and confine myself entirely to it. I see in it three great points,—1, a point of fact; 2, a point of doctrine; 3, a point of duty. Let me try to unfold them.

I. In the first place comes the *point of fact*. We are all made "of one blood." Then the Bible account of the origin of man is true. The Book of Genesis is right. The whole family of mankind, with all its thousand millions, has descended from one pair—from Adam and Eve.

This is a humbling fact, no doubt; but it is true. Kings and their subjects, rich and poor, learned and unlearned, prince and pauper, the educated Englishman and the untutored negro, the fashionable lady at the West End of London and the North American squaw,—all, all might trace their pedigree, if they could trace it through sixty centuries, to one man and one woman. No doubt in the vast period of six thousand years immense varieties of races have gradually been developed. Hot climates and cold climates have affected the colour and physical peculiarities of nations. Civilisation and culture have produced their effect on the habits, demeanour, and mental attainment of the inhabitants of different parts of the globe. Some of Adam's children in the lapse of time have been greatly degraded, and some have been raised and improved. But the great fact remains the same. The story written by Moses is true. All the dwellers in Europe, Asia, Africa, and America originally sprung from Adam and Eve. We were all "made of one blood."

Now why do I dwell on all this? I do it because I wish to impress on the minds of my readers the plenary inspiration and divine authority of the Book of Genesis. I want you to hold fast the old teaching about the origin of man, and to refuse steadily to let it go.

I need hardly remind you that you live in a day of abounding scepticism and unbelief. Clever writers and lecturers are continually pouring contempt on the Old Testament Scriptures, and especially on the Book of Genesis. The contents of that venerable document, we are frequently told, are not to be read as real historical facts, but as fictions and fables. We are not to suppose that Adam and Eve were the only man and woman originally created, and that all mankind sprung from one pair. We are rather to believe that different races of human beings have been called into existence in different parts of the globe, at different times, without any relationship to one another. In short, we are coolly informed that the narratives in the first half of Genesis are only pleasing oriental romances, and are not realities at all! Now, when you hear such talk as this, I charge you not to be moved or shaken for a moment. Stand fast in the old paths of the faith, and especially about the origin of man. There is abundant evidence that Moses is right, and those who impugn his veracity and credibility are wrong. We are all descended from one fallen father. We are all "of one blood."

It would be easy to show, if the limits of this paper permitted, that the oldest traditions of nations all over the globe confirm the account given by Moses in the most striking manner. Geikie, in his *Hours with the Bible*, has briefly shown that the story of the first pair, the serpent, the fall, the flood, and the ark, are found cropping up in one form or another in almost every part of the habitable world. But the strongest proof of our common origin is to be found in the painful uniformity of man's moral nature, whatever be the colour of his skin. Go where you will on the globe, and observe what men and women are everywhere.

Go to the heart of Africa or China, or to the remotest island of the Pacific Ocean, and mark the result of your investigations. I boldly assert that everywhere, and in every climate, you will find the moral nature of the human race exactly the same. Everywhere you will find men and women are naturally wicked, corrupt, selfish, proud, lazy, deceitful, godless,—servants of lusts and passions. And I contend that nothing can reasonably account for this but the first three chapters of Genesis. We are what we are morally, because we have sprung from one parent, and partake of his nature. We are all descendants of one fallen Adam, and in Adam we all died. Moses is right. We are all of "one blood."

After all, if doubt remains in any man's mind, and he cannot quite believe the narratives of Genesis, I ask him to remember what a deadly blow his unbelief strikes at the authority of the New Testament. It is easy work to point out difficulties in the first book of the Bible; but it is not so easy to explain away the repeated endorsement which Genesis receives from Christ and the apostles. There is no getting over the broad fact that creation, the serpent, the fall, Cain and Abel, Enoch, Noah, the flood, the ark, Abraham, Lot, Sodom and Gomorrah, Isaac, Jacob, Esau, are all mentioned in the New Testament as historical things or historical persons. What shall we say to this fact? Were Christ and the apostles deceived and ignorant? The idea is absurd. Did they accommodate themselves to the popular views of their hearers, in order to procure favour with them, knowing all the time that the things and persons they spoke of were fictitious and not historical at all? The very idea is wicked and profane. We are shut up to one conclusion, and I see no alternative. If you give up the Old Testament, you must give up the New also. There is no standing ground between disbelief of the supernatural narratives of Genesis and disbelief of the gospel. If you cannot believe Moses, you ought not to trust Christ and the apostles, who certainly did believe him. Are you really wiser than Jesus or St. Paul? Do you know better than they do? Cast such notions behind your back. Stand firm on the old foundation, and be not carried away by modern theories. And as a great corner-stone place beneath your feet the fact of our text, the common origin of all mankind. "We are all made of one blood."

II. From the point of fact in our text I now pass on to the *point of doctrine*. Are we all of "one blood"? Then we all need one and the same remedy for the great family disease of our souls. The disease I speak of is sin. We inherit it from our parents, and it is a part of our nature. We are born with it, whether gentle or simple, learned or unlearned, rich or poor, as children of fallen Adam, with his blood in our veins. It is a disease which grows with our growth and strengthens with our strength, and unless cured before we die, will be the death of our souls.

Now, what is the only remedy for this terrible spiritual disease? What will cleanse us from the guilt of sin? What will bring health and peace to our poor dead hearts, and enable us to walk with God while we live, and dwell with God when we die? To these questions I give a short but unhesitating reply. For the

one universal soul-disease of all Adam's children, there is only one remedy. That remedy is "the precious blood of Christ." To the blood of Adam we owe the beginning of our deadly spiritual ailment. To the blood of Christ alone must we all look for a cure.

When I speak of the "blood of Christ," my readers must distinctly understand that I do not mean the literal material blood which flowed from His hands and feet and side as He hung on the cross. That blood, I doubt not, stained the fingers of the soldiers who nailed our Lord to the tree; but there is not the slightest proof that it did any good to their souls. If that blood were really in the communion cup at the Lord's Supper, as some profanely tell us, and we touched it with our lips, such mere corporeal touch would avail us nothing. Oh no! When I speak of the "blood" of Christ as the cure for the deadly ailment which we all inherit from the blood of Adam, I mean the life-blood which Christ shed, and the redemption which Christ obtained for sinners when He died for them on Calvary,—the salvation which He procured for us by His vicarious sacrifice,—the deliverance from the guilt and power and consequences of sin, which He purchased when He suffered as our substitute. This and this only is what I mean when I speak of "Christ's blood" as the one medicine needed by all Adam's children. The thing that we all need to save us from eternal death is not merely Christ's incarnation and life, but Christ's *death*. The atoning "blood" which Christ shed when He died, is the grand secret of salvation. It is the blood of the second Adam suffering in our stead, which alone can give life or health and peace to all who have the first Adam's blood in their veins.

I can find no words to express my deep sense of the importance of maintaining in our Church the true doctrine of the blood of Christ. One plague of our age is the widespread dislike to what men are pleased to call dogmatic theology. In the place of it, the idol of the day is a kind of jelly-fish Christianity—a Christianity without bone, or muscle, or sinew,—without any distinct teaching about the atonement or the work of the Spirit, or justification, or the way of peace with God,—a vague, foggy, misty Christianity, of which the only watchwords seem to be, "You must be earnest, and real, and true, and brave, and zealous, and liberal, and kind. You must condemn no man's doctrinal views. You must consider everybody is right, and nobody is wrong." And this creedless kind of religion, we are actually told, is to give us peace of conscience! And not to be satisfied with it in a sorrowful dying world, is a proof that you are very narrow-minded! Satisfied, indeed! Such a religion might possibly do for unfallen angels. But to tell sinful, dying men and women, with the blood of our father Adam in their veins, to be satisfied with it, is an insult to common sense, and a mockery of our distress. We need something far better than this. We need the blood of Christ.

What saith the Scripture about "*that blood*"? Let me try to put my readers in remembrance. Do we want to be clean and guiltless now in the sight of God? It is written that "the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin;"—that "it justifies;"—that "it makes us nigh to God;"—that "through it there is redemption, even the forgiveness of sin;"—that it "purges the conscience;"—that "it makes

peace between God and man;"—that it gives "boldness to enter into the holiest." Yes! it is expressly written of the saints in glory, that "they had washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb," and that they had "overcome their souls' enemies by the blood of the Lamb" (1 John i. 7; Col. i. 20; Heb. x. 19; Eph. i. 7; Heb. ix. 4; Eph. ii. 13; Rom. v. 9; Rev. vii. 14; xii. 11). Why, in the name of common sense, if the Bible is our guide to heaven, why are we to refuse the teaching of the Bible about Christ's blood, and turn to other remedies for the great common soul-disease of mankind?—If, besides this, the sacrifices of the Old Testament did not point to the sacrifice of Christ's death on the cross, they were useless, unmeaning forms, and the outer courts of tabernacle and temple were little better than shambles. But if, as I firmly believe, they were meant to lead the minds of Jews to the better sacrifice of the true Lamb of God, they afford unanswerable confirmation of the position which I maintain this day. That position is, that the one "blood of Christ" is the spiritual medicine for all who have the "one blood of Adam" in their veins.

Does any reader of this paper want to do good in the world? I hope that many do. He is a poor style of Christian who does not wish to leave the world better when he leaves it, than it was when he entered it. Take the advice I give you this day. Beware of being content with half-measures and inadequate remedies for the great spiritual disease of mankind. You will only labour in vain if you do not show men the blood of the Lamb. Like the fabled Sisyphus, however much you strive, you will find the stone ever rolling back upon you. Education, teetotalism, cleaner dwellings, popular concerts, blue ribbon leagues, white cross armies, penny readings, museums,—all, all are very well in their way; but they only touch the surface of man's disease: they do not go to the root. They cast out the devil for a little season; but they do not fill his place, and prevent him coming back again. Nothing will do that but the story of the cross applied to the conscience by the Holy Ghost, and received and accepted by faith. Yes! it is the blood of Christ,—not His example only, or His beautiful moral teaching,—but His vicarious sacrifice that meets the want of the soul. No wonder that St. Peter calls it "precious." Precious it has been found by the heathen abroad, and by the peer and the peasant at home. Precious it was found on a death-bed by the mighty theologian Bengel, by the unwearied labourer John Wesley, by the late Archbishop Longley, and Bishop Hamilton in our own days. May it ever be precious in our eyes! If we want to do good, we must make much of the blood of Christ. There is only one fountain that can cleanse any one's sin. That fountain is the blood of the Lamb.

III. The third and last point which arises out of our text is *a point of duty*. Are we all of "one blood"? Then we ought to live as if we were. We ought to behave as members of one great family. We ought to "love as brethren." We ought to put away from us anger, wrath, malice, quarrelling, as especially hateful in the sight of God. We ought to cultivate kindness and charity to wards all men. The dark-skinned African negro, the dirtiest dweller in some vile slum of London, has a claim upon our attention. He is a relative and a brother, whether

we like to believe it or not. Like ourselves, he is a descendant of Adam and Eve, and inherits a fallen nature and a never-dying soul.

Now what are we Christians doing to prove that we believe and realize all this? What are we doing for our brethren? I trust we do not forget that it was wicked Cain who asked that awful question, "Am I my brother's keeper?"

What are we doing for the heathen abroad? That is a grave question, and one which I have no time to consider fully this day. I only remark that we do far less than we ought to do. The nation whose proud boast it is that her flag is to be seen in every port on the globe, gives less to the cause of Foreign Missions than the cost of a single first-class ironclad man-of-war.

But what are we doing for the masses at home? That is a far graver question, and one which imperiously demands a reply. The heathen are out of sight and out of mind. The English masses are hard by our own doors, and their condition is a problem which politicians and philanthropists are anxiously trying to solve, and which cannot be evaded. What are we doing to lessen the growing sense of inequality between rich and poor, and to fill up the yawning gulf of discontent? Socialism, and communism, and confiscation of property are looming large in the distance, and occupying much attention in the press. Atheism and secularism are spreading fast in some quarters, and specially in overgrown and neglected parishes. Now, what is the path of duty?

I answer without hesitation, that we want a larger growth of brotherly love in the land. We want men and women to grasp the great principle that we are all of "one blood," and to lay themselves out to do good. We want the rich to care more for the poor, and the employer for the employed, and wealthy congregations for the working-class congregations in the great cities, and the West End of London to care more for the East and the South. And, let us remember, it is not merely temporal relief that is wanted. The Roman emperors tried to keep the proletarians and the lower classes quiet by the games of the circus and largesses of corn. And some ignorant modern Britons seem to think that money, cheap food, good dwellings, and recreation are healing medicines for the evils of our day in the lowest stratum of society. It is a complete mistake. What the masses want is more sympathy, more kindness, more brotherly love, and more treatment as if they were really of "one blood" with ourselves. Give them that, and you will fill up half the gulf of discontent.

It is a common saying in this day, that the working classes have no religion, that they are alienated from the Church of England, that they cannot be brought to church, and that it is hopeless and useless to try to do them good. I believe nothing of the kind. I believe the working classes are not one jot more opposed to religion than the upper ten thousand, and that they are just as open to good influences, and even more likely to be saved if they are approached in the right way. But what they do like is to be treated as "one blood," and what is wanted is a great increase of sympathy and personal friendly dealing with them. I confess that I have immense faith in the power of sympathy and kindness. I believe the late Judge Talfourd hit the right nail on the head when he said, in almost his last charge to a Grand Jury at Stafford Assizes,—Gentlemen, the great want of the

age is more sympathy between classes." I entirely agree with him. I think an increase of sympathy and fellow-feeling between high and low, rich and poor, employer and employed, parson and people, is one healing medicine which the age demands. Sympathy, exhibited in its perfection, was one secondary cause of the acceptance which Christ's gospel met with on its first appearance in the heathen world. Well says Lord Macaulay,—"It was before Deity taking a human form, walking among men, partaking of their infirmities, leaning on their bosoms, weeping over their graves, slumbering in the manger, bleeding on the cross, that the prejudices of the synagogue, and the doubts of the academy, and the fasces of the lictor, and the swords of thirty legions, were humbled in the dust." And sympathy, I firmly believe, can do as much in the nineteenth century as it did in the first. If anything will melt down the cold isolation of classes in these latter days, and make our social body consist of solid cubes compacted together, instead of spheres only touching each other at one point, it will be a large growth of Christ-like sympathy.

Now I assert confidently that the English working man is peculiarly open to sympathy. The working man may live in a poor dwelling; and after toiling all day in a coal pit, or cotton mill, or iron foundry, or dock, or chemical works, he may often look very rough and dirty. But after all he is flesh and blood like ourselves. Beneath his outward roughness he has a heart and a conscience, a keen sense of justice, and a jealous recollection of his rights, as a man and a Briton. He does not want to be patronised and flattered, any more than to be trampled on, scolded, or neglected; but he does like to be dealt with as a brother, in a friendly, kind, and sympathizing way. He will not be driven; he will do nothing for a cold, hard man, however clever he may be. But give him a Christian visitor to his home, who really understands that it is the heart and not the coat which makes the man, and that the guinea's worth is in the gold, and not in the stamp upon it. Give him a visitor who will not only talk about Christ, but sit down in his house, and take him by the hand in a Christ-like familiar way. Give him a visitor, and specially a clergyman, who realizes that in Christ's holy religion there is no respect of persons, that rich and poor are "made of one blood," and need one and the same atoning blood, and that there is only one Saviour, and one Fountain for sin, and one heaven, both for employers and employed. Give him a clergyman who can weep with them that weep, and rejoice with them that rejoice, and feel a tender interest in the cares, and troubles, and births, and marriages, and deaths of the humblest dweller in his parish. Give the working man, I say, a clergyman of that kind, and, as a general rule, the working man will come to his church, and not be a communist or an infidel. Such a clergyman will not preach to empty benches. How little, after all, do most people seem to realize the supreme importance of brotherly love, and the absolute necessity of imitating that blessed Saviour who "went about doing good" to all, if we would prove ourselves His disciples! If ever there was a time when conduct like that of the Good Samaritan in the parable was rare, it is the time in which we live. Selfish indifference to the wants of others is a painful characteristic of the age. Search the land in which we live, from the Isle of Wight to Berwick-on-Tweed,

and from the Land's End to the North Foreland, and name, if you can, a single county or town in which the givers to good works are not a small minority, and in which philanthropic and religious agencies are not kept going, only and entirely, by painful begging and constant importunity. Go where you will, the report is always the same. Hospitals, missions at home and abroad, evangelistic and educational agencies, churches, chapels, and mission halls,—all are incessantly checked and hindered by want of support. Where are the Samaritans, we may well ask, in this land of Bibles and Testaments? Where are the Christians who live as if we are "all of one blood." Where are the men who love their neighbours, and will help to provide for dying bodies and souls? Where are the people always ready and willing to give unasked, and without asking how much others have given? Millions are annually spent on deer forests, and moors, and hunting, and yachting, and racing, and gambling, and balls, and theatres, and dressing, and pictures, and furniture, and recreation. Little, comparatively, ridiculously little, is given or done for the cause of Christ. A miserable guinea subscription too often is the whole sum bestowed by some Cræsus on the bodies and souls of his fellow-men. The very first principles of giving seem lost and forgotten in many quarters. People must be bribed and tempted to contribute by bazaars, as children in badly-managed families are bribed and tempted to be good by sugar-plums! They must not be expected to give unless they get something in return! And all this goes on in a country where people call themselves Christians, and go to church, and glory in ornate ceremonials, and histrionic rituals, and what are called "hearty services," and profess to believe the parable of the Good Samaritan. I fear there will be a sad waking up at the last day.

Where, after all, to come to the root of the matter, where is that brotherly love which used to be the distinguishing mark of the primitive Christians? Where, amidst the din of controversy and furious strife of parties, where is the fruit of the Holy Spirit and the primary mark of spiritual regeneration? Where is that charity, without which we are no better than "sounding brass and tinkling cymbals"? Where is the charity which is the bond of perfectness? Where is that love by which our Lord declared all men should know His disciples, and which St. John said was the distinction between the children of God and the children of the devil? Where is it, indeed? Read in the newspapers the frightfully violent language of opposing politicians. Mark the hideous bitterness of controversial theologians, both in the press and on the platform. Observe the fiendish delight with which anonymous letter-writers endeavour to wound the feelings of opponents, and then to pour vitriol into the wound. Look at all this ghastly spectacle, which any observing eye may see any day in England. And then remember that this is the country in which men are reading the New Testament and professing to follow Christ, and to believe that they are all of "one blood." Can anything more grossly inconsistent be conceived? Can anything be imagined more offensive to God? Truly, it is astonishing that such myriads should be so keen about Christian profession and external worship, and yet so utterly careless about the simplest elements of Christian practice. Where there is no love there is no spiri-

tual life. Without brotherly love, although baptized and communicants, men are dead in trespasses and sins.

I shall wind up all I have to say on the point of duty by reminding my readers of the solemn words which St. Matthew records to have been spoken by our Lord in the twenty-fifth chapter of his Gospel. In the great and dreadful day of judgment, when the Son of man shall sit on the throne of His glory, there are some to whom He will say, "Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: for I was an hungered, and ye gave Me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave Me no drink: I was a stranger, and ye took Me not in: naked, and ye clothed Me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited Me not. Then shall they also answer Him, saying, Lord, when saw we Thee an hungered, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto Thee? Then shall He answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to Me" (Matt. xxv. 41—46).

I declare I know very few passages of Scripture more solemn and heart-searching than this. It is not charged against these unhappy lost souls that they had committed murder, adultery, or theft, or that they had not been churchgoers or communicants. Oh, no! nothing of the kind. They had simply *done nothing at all*. They had neglected love to others. They had not tried to lessen the misery, or increase the happiness, of this sin-burdened world. They had selfishly sat still, done no good, and had no eyes to see, or hearts to feel, for their brethren, the members of Adam's great family. And so their end is everlasting punishment! If these words cannot set some people thinking when they look at the state of the masses in some of our large towns, nothing will.

And now I shall close this paper with three words of friendly advice, which I commend to the attention of all who read it. They are words in season for the days in which we live, and I am sure they are worth remembering.

(a) First and foremost, I charge you never to give up the old doctrine of the *plenary inspiration* of the whole Bible. Hold it fast, and never let it go. Let nothing tempt you to think that any part of the grand old volume is not inspired, or that any of its narratives, and especially in Genesis, are not to be believed. Once take up that ground, and you will find yourself on an inclined plane. Well will it be if you do not slip down into utter infidelity! Faith's difficulties, no doubt, are great; but the difficulties of scepticism are far greater.

(b) In the next place, I charge you never to give up the old doctrine of *the blood of Christ*, the complete satisfaction which that atoning blood made for sin, and the impossibility of being saved except by that blood. Let nothing tempt you to believe that it is enough to look at the example of Christ, or to receive the sacrament which Christ commanded to be received, and which many nowadays worship like an idol. When you come to your deathbed, you will want something more than an example and a sacrament. Take heed that you are found resting all your weight on Christ's substitution for you on the cross, and His atoning blood, or it will be better if you had never been born.

(c) Last, but not least, I charge you never to neglect the *duty of brotherly love*, and practical, active, sympathetic kindness towards every one around you, whether high or low, or rich or poor. Try daily to do some good upon earth, and to leave the world a better world than it was when you were born. If you are really a child of God, strive to be like your elder brother in heaven. For Christ's sake, do not be content to have religion for yourself alone. Love, charity, kindness, and sympathy are the truest proofs that we are real members of Christ, genuine children of God, and rightful heirs of the kingdom of heaven.

Of "one blood" we were all born. In "one blood" we all need to be washed. To all partakers of Adam's "one blood" we are bound, if we love life, to be charitable, sympathizing, loving, and kind. The time is short. We are going, going, and shall soon be gone to a world where there is no evil to remedy, and no scope for works of mercy. Then for Christ's sake let us all try to do some good before we die, and to lessen the sorrows of this sin-burdened world.