

GOD'S GREATEST PROVISION- MAN'S MOST EFFECTIVE PLEA - THE PRECIOUS BLOOD OF CHRIST
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MOST EFFECTIVE PLEA--THE PRECIOUS
BLOOD OF CHRIST (1 PETER 1:19)

Dr. Beny, one of the most famous of British preachers, was asked by a young woman to get her mother into the kingdom of God before it was too late! That scholarly minister described later how he sat beside the dying lady and gave extracts from some of his most acclaimed sermons. She responded saying, "No, not that! Get me in." Then he repeated what he had heard when he was only a small child. He said, "Mother, there is a great God in heaven who loves us . . . ~ "Ah," she exclaimed, "that's better." The preacher continued. "Yes, He sent His Son, the Lord Jesus, down to earth, and because He died for you and me, His precious blood can make us clean." Suddenly, she replied, "Of course, that's it. His blood can make us clean." Later, when he told his story, Dr. Berry exultantly exclaimed, "I got her in; I got her in. And then, I slipped in myself."

Through His Blood... Pardon is Received (Ephesians 1:7)

Paul wrote to the Christians in Ephesus saying, "In whom [Christ] we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace." That was the basic principle of the message the apostle preached throughout his ministry. Redemption was typified and portrayed by the Jewish Passover, practiced throughout Hebrew history, and proclaimed by every New Testament evangelist. The Passover Feast continued to be a reminder of the night when the first born of every Egyptian family died. Yet the astonishing fact remained that although the captives were probably equally as sinful, their first born were spared, not because they had a prior claim on the kindness of Jehovah but by the fact they were protected by the blood of a slain lamb. Responding to the instruction of Moses, the Israelites obeyed the commandments of God, placed the evidence of sacrifice on their homes, and confidently closed the doors, knowing God would honor His promise.

Throughout the following centuries all Hebrew parents explained to their children the significance of the Passover, and the feast became the most solemn event in the calendar. Even the boys and girls knew the nation existed, not because of the importance of their lineage, but because their forefathers had believed God. Thus in a strange but entrancing manner, the Lord prepared the nation for the

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time when John the Baptist would proclaim, "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29). The scope and magnificence of Christ's sacrifice was indicated in the fact that unlike the Passover lamb which availed only for a limited number of people, the atoning death of the Savior gave hope to people of all nations in every generation. Yet its effectiveness could never be realized until faith and obedience to God made that possible. Happy are they who can say:

I have no other argument
I need no other plea:
It is enough that Jesus died,
And that He died for me.

Through His Blood... Peace is Realized (Colossians 1:20)

Peace is the assurance within the human heart that a state of war has ended. Writing to the Colossians, Paul said, "And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself" The difficulties which existed between God and man

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were resolved through the death of the Savior. When Jesus cried, "It is finished," He knew that what He was commissioned to do had been successfully accomplished. The preachers within the early church endorsed that message when they proclaimed that faith in the Redeemer brought the peace of God to the troubled souls of men and women. Paul wrote to the Christians in Rome, saying, "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God" (Rom. 5:1). This was emphasized when the writer to the Hebrews said, "For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" (Heb. 9:13-14).

A disturbed conscience is not a comforting companion. The memory of moral decadence and repeated failure to achieve spiritual ambitions destroys the tranquility of the human spirit. Guilt is a burden too heavy to be carried. Yet the serenity of the soul can be restored when forgiveness thrills the recipient. God said, "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD. Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool" (Isa 1:18). The Savior said, "Verily, verily, I say unto

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you, he that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life" (John 5:24). This glorious promise endorses the words spoken through the prophet, "I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more" (Jer. 31:34). Men and women can know they have been reconciled to God—that their feud with the Almighty has terminated.

Through His Blood ... Power is Released (Revelation 12:10-11)

"And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night. And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death."

To be acquainted with the power of Christ's redeeming blood is probably the greatest acquisition of any Christian. It is the invisible shield that protects beleaguered souls from satanic domination. When a believer claims that protective power, the forces of evil become inoperative. Conflicts are often lost because men and women rely upon human sufficiency, and their resources are never adequate. The apostle John expressed the most valuable of all doctrines when he explained how Satan was overcome when the saints exercised their God-given authority and used against the enemy their strongest weapon—the blood of the Lamb.

I shall never forget a night when an evangelistic service was threatened by a very emotional woman. The unfortunate woman had lost control of her feelings, and her screams and shouts disturbed the entire congregation. When she howled like a wolf, I sat with the pastor and feared the meeting would be ruined. Evidently this was a direct effort by Satan to prevent the preaching of the gospel. Desperately I began to pray. I said, "Lord, I cannot manage this situation, but I plead the protective power of Thy precious blood. Please Lord, cover this meeting and prevent the evil one from interfering." Within a few moments the woman became silent and remained motionless throughout the remaining part of the service. Afterward the pastor said, "I saw your lips moving." I replied, "I was asking the Lord to protect the service with the power of His

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precious blood." It seems evident that spiritual battles are often lost
because Christians fail to use the weapons God has made available.

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Though His Blood... Purity is Restored (1 John 1:7)

"But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin." This was among the greatest of John's statements. The apostle spoke of continuous cleansing. This was not only a purification of the soul, but also a maintenance of that condition. Nevertheless, John was careful to emphasize this blessing was conditional. He said, "If we walk in the light God's abundant grace is not a license to sin. People who walk in the light yield to the divine will. Deliberate sinning is prohibited, moral pitfalls avoided, and everything contrary to the directions of the Holy Spirit outlawed. There are sins of which some Christians may be unaware—sins of omission. As a Christian grows in grace, he learns that certain things thought to be harmless might become dangerous. Therefore, in cooperation with the Lord, he rejects and avoids them. This is walking in the light, the secret of enjoying fellowship with the Lord. Christians filled with the Holy Spirit never do anything that is obnoxious. The Lord said, "If ye love me, keep my commandments." When people persistently resist the suggestions of the Divine Spirit, they are not walking in the light and are not continually cleansed from their sins. Their conscience becomes a source of annoyance, usefulness in Christ's service is impaired, and, as was the case with David, the joy of salvation is lost (Ps. 51:11-12).

Unfortunately, many Christians who have willfully transgressed have fallen into error believing they have committed an unpardonable sin. They believe it is impossible to restore former relationships with God. The future is therefore ruined, and the rest of their life is disastrous. Continuing frustration and defeat lead to tragedy. Dismay and shame produce frightening results. It then becomes easy for people to believe it is better to die than to live in misery. That conclusion is often the forerunner of suicide, when everything of value is destroyed. It should be remembered that the most important work of the Holy Spirit is the presentation of the Savior. Jesus said, "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you" (John 16:13-14). The sin against the Holy Spirit is the rejection of His message—the failure to accept the Lord whom He presents. There is no forgiveness for that sin, either on earth or in eternity.

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It is difficult to believe that anyone who truly loved Christ could curse Him. Saints make mistakes, but they would never renounce their Lord. Simon Peter disappointed his Master but wept his way back to the feet of Jesus. Others have been wounded in the battles of life, but the tenderness of divine mercy became evident in the restoring power of God's care. John gave excellent advice to his friends when he wrote, "My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous" (1 John 2:1). We cannot walk and stand still at the same moment. If we walk in the light, we walk with God and cannot be alone. To walk with the Lord leads to continual cleansing.

Through His Blood ... Paradise is Reached (Revelation 7:14)

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John was surely entranced when God revealed to him the book of Revelation. He saw a great company of people arrayed in white garments and listened as an elder asked, "What are these who are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they?" John replied, "Sir, thou knowest. And he said unto me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb" (Rev. 7:13-14). These saints had already reached their eternal home; their dreams had come true. They were not hoping to reach heaven; they had arrived. The elder explained these people were eternally safe, not because of their identification with any special religious organization nor the intercession of any trusted clergyman, but because they were in the presence of God and their garments had been cleansed in the blood of God's Son.

(1) A Sincere Desire. "They washed their robes." It is necessary for us to accept what God provides. Washing machines may be very efficient, but human hands must place the soiled articles into the appliance. The cleansing of dirty clothing varies in certain countries. Nevertheless, unless people desire cleansing and participate in the process, nothing avails in the successful laundering of their soiled clothing. The same truth applies to the lives of men and women. Unless sinners desire to be clean, even God cannot perform what needs to be done. John, referring to the saints in heaven, said, "They washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."

(2) A Safe Detergent. I have often watched Egyptian women placing their soiled garments into the muddy waters of the river

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Nile. In India I was fascinated when the Hindus performed similar chores in the filthy waters of the Ganges. Evidently they were satisfied with their efforts because they had no more efficient way of washing their linen. Within Western countries manufacturers spend enormous sums of money advertising products, and competition is keen. They all claim to have the most effective way of getting clothes as white as snow. It is extremely doubtful whether any machine can justify the claims made by its manufacturer. People are now being told that even the snow becomes polluted when falling through a contaminated atmosphere.

It is refreshing to learn that God's remedy for sinful souls is perfect. He can do what other agencies cannot. His detergent is perfect and is supplied without cost! This was evident when John was informed about the cleansing power of the blood of Christ. Sometimes housewives are disappointed when their best efforts fail to remove annoying stains. When the Lord cleanses souls, even the most resistant blemishes disappear forever.

(3) A Scintillating Display. "And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean" (Rev. 19:14). This seems to be one of the attractive characteristics of heaven. Describing the transfiguration of the Lord, Luke said, "And as he prayed, the fashion of his countenance was altered, and his raiment was white and glistening [sparkling]" (Luke 9:29). When Matthew described the appearance of the angel at the tomb of the Lord, he wrote, "His countenance was like lightning and his raiment white as snow" (Matt. 28:3).

John Bunyan, in his thrilling book Pilgrim's Progress, describes a man who climbed over a wall to begin his pilgrimage toward the celestial city. He considered it unnecessary to pass through the official entrance gate and never went near the cross. Later he was refused admittance to the city of God. Yet Christian, who had been to Calvary, was given a great welcome. The precious blood of Christ was his passport to God's country; it guaranteed an entrance. Blessed are they whose garments have been made white.

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