

Christ Our Sacrifice.

Review and Herald, September 21, 1886

By Mrs. E. G. White.

As we look back and see how small was the work thirty years ago, and how bound about with poverty, the evidence is very clear that God has singularly led us as a people. Amid discouragement and financial embarrassment, the word has come to us again and again, "Go forward!" And the same voice still says, "Go forward!"

God has wonderfully led us. There have been apostasies and threatened dangers; there have been deep plots laid by the adversary of souls to ensnare us; but we are still on the move "forward." There have been sins among us as among ancient Israel; but, thank God! Christ has been to us an open door which no man could shut. Men may freely extend to us forgiveness for all injuries done them; but that will not blot out one sin from the great record book. But the voice sounding from Calvary--"My son, my daughter, thy sins be forgiven thee"--is all efficacious. That word alone has power, and awakens gratitude in the grateful heart. There is but one channel of forgiveness, and that is ever open; and through it comes pouring a rich flood of divine mercy and forgiveness.

"The cleansing stream I see, I see,"--and the greatest sinner may find pardon.

Many have expressed wonder that God demanded so many slain victims in the sacrificial offerings of the Jewish people; but it was to rivet in their minds the great truth that without shedding of blood there is no remission of sins. A lesson was embodied in every sacrifice, impressed in every ceremony, solemnly preached by the priest in his holy office, and inculcated by God himself,--that through the blood of Christ alone is there forgiveness of sins. How little we as a people feel the force of this great truth! How seldom, by living, acting faith, do we bring into our lives this great truth, that there is forgiveness for the least sin, forgiveness for the greatest sin!

I wish I could present the subject as it seems to me. Justice demanded the sufferings of a man. Christ, equal with God, gave the sufferings of a God. He needed no atonement. His suffering was not for any sin he had committed; it was for man--all for man; and his free pardon is accessible to all. The suffering of Christ was in correspondence with his spotless purity; his depth of agony, proportionate to the dignity and grandeur of his character. Never can we comprehend the intense anguish of the spotless Lamb of God, until we realize how deep is the pit from which we have been rescued, how grievous is the sin of which mankind is guilty, and by faith grasp the full and entire pardon. Here is where thousands are failing. They do not really believe that Jesus pardons them personally, individually. They fail to take God at his word. He has assured us that faithful is He that hath promised to forgive us, but still he will be just to his own law. His mercy is wanting in nothing. Were one link in the chain defective, then were we hopelessly ruined in our sins. But the chain is perfect--not one flaw in any part, not one link missing.

I would I might sound the glad note to earth's remotest bounds. "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." Oh, precious redemption! How broad this great truth is--that God for Christ's dear sake, forgives us the moment we ask him in living faith, believing that he is fully able. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." Glorious truth! Just to his own law, and yet the justifier of all them that believe! Well may we exclaim with the prophet, "Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? He retaineth not his anger forever, because he delighteth in mercy."

Those who are so gloomy and desponding, gathering clouds of darkness about them, would find strength and encouragement if they would spend one hour of each day in searching the Scriptures for these precious promises, gathering and treasuring them like precious pearls. Let them dwell especially upon the mercy of God and his willingness to forgive sins. Many who have all their lives walked under a cloud, would be filled with amazement as they view the channels overflowing with mercies instead of dark clouds heavy with wrath and denunciations.

We need greater faith in Jesus Christ. We need to bring him into our every-day life. Then we shall have peace and joy, and we shall know by experience the meaning of his words, "If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love." Our faith must claim the promise that we abide in the love of Jesus. "These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full. This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you." {RH, September 21, 1886 par. 8}

Precious opportunities and privileges are granted to us to be a light and blessing to others, strengthening their faith, and encouraging them through the heavenly sunshine in our own souls. We may gather for our own benefit precious rays of cheerful hope and peace and fullness of joy, and in so doing help every one with whom we associate. Instead of strengthening unbelief and doubt, we shall inspire hope.

It is the privilege of all who comply with the conditions to have an experimental faith, to know for themselves that pardon is freely extended for every sin. God has pledged his word that when we confess our sins he will forgive them and cleanse from all unrighteousness. Put away unbelief. Put away the suspicion that these promises are not meant for you. They are for every repentant transgressor, and God is dishonored by your unbelief. Let those who have been filled with doubt, only believe the words of Jesus fully, and thence forward they will rejoice in blessedness of light. Jesus said, "The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life." In relying upon the sure word of God, in showing confidence in him, we honor him; and he has said that if we honor him he will honor us.

We keep the Saviour too far apart from our every-day lives. We want him abiding with us as an honored, trusted friend. We should consult him on all subjects. We should tell him every trial, and thus gain strength to meet temptation; and his peace will enter our

souls, and our joy will be full, as we contemplate that this mighty Helper has said, "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." Let us open our hearts to receive the peace and joy of heaven; and let our lips make melody to God in praise and thanksgiving for these wonderful blessings vouchsafed to us.

In the light of divine revelation, through the atoning Sacrifice, we may see the glorious plan of redemption whereby our sins are pardoned, and we drawn near to the heart of infinite love. We see how God can retain all his justice, and yet pardon the transgressor of his law. And we are not simply forgiven, but we are accepted of God through the Beloved. The plan of redemption is not merely a way of escape from the penalty of transgression, but through it the sinner is forgiven his sins, and will be finally received into heaven,--not as a forgiven culprit pardoned and released from captivity, yet looked upon with suspicion and not admitted to friendship and trust; but welcomed as a child, and taken back into fullest confidence. The sacrifice of our Saviour has made ample provision for every repenting, believing soul. We are saved because God loves the purchase of the blood of Christ; and not only will he pardon the repentant sinner, not only will he permit him to enter heaven, but he, the Father of mercies, will wait at the very gates of heaven to welcome us, to give us an abundant entrance to the mansions of the blest. Oh what love, what wondrous love the Father has shown in the gift of his beloved Son for this fallen race! And this Sacrifice is a channel for the outflow of his infinite love, that all who believe on Jesus Christ may, like the prodigal son, receive full and free restoration to the favor of Heaven.

Have we not grand themes for thought, and a solid foundation for our faith? What more can we ask of God than what he has already given us? Oh the love, the infinite love of our blessed Lord, to be our sacrifice! What joy should fill the heart of the Christian, and what expressions of gratitude be heard from his lips! that through the blood of Jesus it is possible for us to gain the love of God, to be one with him. If by living faith we accept this wonderful salvation, we shall never perish as guilty transgressors of God's holy immutable law. Believing on the Son, we shall be obedient to all of the Father's commandments, and have life through Jesus Christ.

But many fail to act upon this faith, and therefore God is dishonored. They go about as if under a weight of woe and condemnation, when they might have peace and comfort and hope and fullness of joy. If they would but bring Jesus into their life, they might receive the rich blessings in store for them. When we have such daily manifestations of God's love to us, why should we continually act as if suspicious of him? Rather, let us honor him by implicit belief in his word.

We have not a Saviour in Joseph's new tomb, with a great stone before the door of the sepulcher. Jesus is not dead. We have a risen Lord, ascended on high, who ever liveth to make intercession for us. Be not weeping, like Mary, because they have taken away our Lord, and ye know not where they have laid him. We know where he is,--in the presence of the Father, pleading his blood for the forgiveness of our sins.

But the gospel of good news was not to be interpreted as allowing men to live in continued rebellion against God by transgressing his just and holy law. Why cannot those who claim to understand the Scriptures, see that God's requirement under grace is just the same he made in Eden,--perfect obedience to his law. In the Judgment, God will ask those who profess to be Christians, Why did you claim to believe in my Son, and continue to transgress my law? Who required this at your hands--to trample upon my rules of righteousness? "Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams." The gospel of the New Testament is not the Old Testament standard lowered to meet the sinner and save him in his sins. God requires of all his subjects obedience, entire obedience to all his commandments. He demands now as ever perfect righteousness as the only title to heaven. Christ is our hope and our refuge. His righteousness only is imputed to the obedient. Let us accept it through faith, that the Father shall find in us no sin. But those who have trampled on the holy law will have no right to claim that righteousness. Oh that we might view the immensity of the plan of salvation as obedient children to all God's requirements, believing that we have peace with God through Jesus Christ, our atoning sacrifice!