

The Price of Our Redemption IV

Youth Instructor

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Christ was not compelled to endure the cruel treatment inflicted upon him. He was not compelled to undertake the work of redemption,--to step down from his heavenly throne, and come to this earth to receive hatred, abuse, rejection, and a crown of thorns. The humiliation that he endured, he endured voluntarily, to save a world from eternal ruin. He might have continued to abide in the heavenly courts, clothed in garments of purest white, sitting as a prince at God's right hand. Voluntarily he offered himself, a willing sacrifice.

Not one of the angels could have become surety for the human race: their life is God's; they could not surrender it. The angels all wear the yoke of obedience. They are the appointed messengers of Him who is the commander of all heaven. But Christ is equal with God, infinite and omnipotent. He could pay the ransom for man's freedom. He is the eternal, self-existing Son, on whom no yoke had come; and when God asked, "Whom shall I send?" he could reply, "Here am I; send me." He could pledge himself to become man's surety; for he could say that which the highest angel could not say,--I have power over my own life, "power to lay it down, and . . . power to take it again."

When Christ uttered the cry, "It is finished," he knew that the battle was won. As a moral conqueror, he planted his banner on the eternal heights. Was there not joy among the angels? Not a son nor a daughter of Adam but could now lay hold on the merits of the spotless Son of God, and say: "Christ has died for me. He is my Saviour. The blood that speaketh better things than that of Abel has been shed. The way into the holiest of all has been made manifest."

God bowed his head satisfied. Now justice and mercy could blend. Now he could be just, and yet the Justifier of all who should believe on Christ. He looked upon the victim expiring on the cross, and said, "It is finished. The human race shall have another trial." The redemption price was paid, and Satan fell like lightning from heaven.

The darkness rolled away from the Saviour and from the cross. Christ bowed his head and died. The compact between Father and Son was fully consummated. Christ had fulfilled his pledge. In death he was more than conqueror. His right hand and his glorious, holy arm had gotten him the victory.

When the loud cry, "It is finished," came from the lips of Christ, the priests were officiating in the temple. The lamb prefiguring Christ has been brought in to be slain. Clothed in his significant and beautiful dress, the priest stands with lifted knife, as did Abraham when about to slay his son. With intense interest the people look on. But the earth trembles and quakes; for the Lord himself draws near. With a rending noise the veil of the temple is torn from top to bottom by an unseen hand, throwing open to the gaze of

the multitude a place once filled with the presence of God. In this place the Shekinah once dwelt. Here God had once manifested his glory above the mercy-seat. No one but the high priest ever lifted the veil separating this apartment from the rest of the tabernacle; and he entered in but once a year, to make atonement for the sins of the people. But lo! the veil is rent in twain. No longer is there any secrecy there.

All is terror and confusion. The priest is about to plunge his knife into the heart of the victim; but the knife drops from his hand, and the lamb, no longer fettered, escapes.

By the rending of the veil of the temple, God said, I can no longer reveal my presence in the most holy place. A new and living Way, before which there hangs no veil, is offered to all. No longer need sinful, sorrowing humanity await the coming of the high priest.

Type had met antitype in the death of God's Son. The Lamb of God had been offered as a sacrifice. It was as if a voice had said to the worshipers, "There is now an end to all sacrifices and offerings."

The crucifixion took place at the time of the Passover, and thousands beheld Christ's humiliation. Some look upon this publicity only as shame and defeat. But this God had appointed. The Saviour's work must be deep and thorough. Without shedding of blood there is no remission for sins. Christ must suffer the agony of a public death on the cross, that witness of it might be borne without the shadow of a doubt. It was God's purpose that publicity should be given to the whole transaction, point after point, scene after scene, one phase of the humiliation reaching into another.

Mrs. E. G. White.