Both Repentance and Forgiveness Are Gifts From Christ

Him God has exalted to His right hand to be Prince and Savior, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins. Acts 5:31, NKJV.

There are many who have erroneous ideas in regard to the nature of repentance. They think that they cannot come to Christ unless they first repent, and that repentance prepares them for the forgiveness of their sins. It is true that repentance does precede the forgiveness of sins; for it is only the broken and contrite heart that will feel the need of a Savior.

But must sinners wait until they have repented before they can come to Jesus? Is repentance to be made an obstacle between the sinner and the Savior? Jesus has said, "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me." Christ is constantly drawing people to Himself, while Satan is as diligently seeking by every imaginable device to draw them away from their Redeemer. Christ must be revealed to sinners as the Savior dying for the sins of the world; and as they behold the Lamb of God on the cross of Calvary, the mysteries of redemption begin to unfold to the mind, and the goodness of God leads to repentance.

Although the plan of salvation calls for the deepest study of the philosopher, it is not too deep for the comprehension of a child. In dying for sinners, Christ manifested a love that is incomprehensible; and in beholding this love the heart is impressed, the conscience is aroused, and the soul is led to inquire, "What is sin, that it should require such a sacrifice for the redemption of its victim?" ... The apostle Paul gave instruction in regard to the plan of salvation. He declares, "I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have shewed you, and have taught you publicly, and from house to house, testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ." John, speaking of the Savior, says, "Ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin." ...

Sinners must come to Christ because they see Him as their Savior, their only helper, that they may be enabled to repent; for if they could repent without coming to Christ, they could also be saved without Christ. It is the virtue that goes forth from Christ that leads to genuine repentance.... Repentance is as much the gift of Christ as is forgiveness, and it cannot be found in the heart where Jesus has not been at work. We can no more repent without the Spirit of Christ to awaken the conscience than we can be pardoned without Christ. Christ draws the sinner by the exhibition of His love upon the cross, and this softens the heart, impresses the mind, and inspires contrition and repentance in the soul.--The Review and Herald, April 1, 1890.