

The Penalty of Sin Exposed

The background of the entire page is a warm, golden sunset or sunrise over a hazy horizon. In the center, a large, dark silhouette of a cross is superimposed. In the foreground, the silhouettes of a family are visible: a man on the left holding a young child, a woman in the center, and two more children on the right. The overall mood is contemplative and spiritual.

**What is the nature of sin and its punishment,
where and with whom did it originate, and is
there a divine remedy available to humanity
offering eternal life?**

Tony Pace

Contents

THE WAGES OF SIN	3
TRANSGRESSION	9
REDEMPTION AND REJECTION IN HEAVEN	17
THE CALL FOR DIVINE PUNISHMENT	21
UNPARDONABLE SIN AND DEATH	26
THE ULTIMATE SACRIFICE	28

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THE WAGES OF SIN

We read from Scripture that the “wages of sin is death” (**Romans 6:23**), that is to say, the penalty of sin is an *eternal* death.

Key questions then need to be asked and answered on the nature of sin and its punishment. Where and with whom did this originate, and is there a divine remedy available to humanity offering eternal life?

Before we begin, let us first understand that our natural inclinations and our inherent condition is not toward the things of God;

The natural heart has not been changed, and **the carnal mind remains at enmity with God**. They are **Satan’s faithful servants**, notwithstanding they have assumed another name.” {EW 273.2}

The understanding of the **people** of God has been **blinded**, for **Satan** has **misrepresented** the **character** of **God**. {FW 81.1}

John 8:44 (KJV) Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do.

In this darkness of sin, we lose the capability for understanding the true character of God.

It is the **darkness** of **misapprehension** of God that is enshrouding the world. **Men are losing their knowledge of His character**. It has been **misunderstood** and **misinterpreted**.

At this time a message from God is to be proclaimed, a message illuminating in its influence and saving in its power. **His character is to be made known**. Into the darkness of the world is to be shed the light of His glory, **the light of His goodness, mercy, and truth**. {COL 415.3}

In this condition, what does Scripture say about how well we would understand God’s thoughts and ways?

Isaiah 55:8 (KJV) For my thoughts are not your thoughts, **neither are your ways my ways**, saith the LORD.

When we read Scripture, do we love the Father (and Son) or fear them?

Revelation 14:7 (KJV) Saying with a loud voice, **Fear God, and give glory to him**; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.

For instance, in Greek “fear” has a several meanings;

5399. φοβέω **phobeo** (phobéō) φοβέω phobéō, fob-eh'-o to frighten, i.e. (passively) to be alarmed; by analogy, **to be in awe of**, i.e. revere:—be (+ sore) afraid, fear (exceedingly), **reverence**.

While Scripture points out, that fear is done away with perfect love;

1 John 4:18 (KJV) There is **no fear in love**; but **perfect love casteth out fear**: because **fear hath torment**. He that feareth is not made **perfect in love**.

If we re-read Revelation 14:7 with the revised definitions we cast a totally different meaning;

Saying with a loud voice and **perfect love** towards **God**, in **awe** and **reverence**, give glory to him!

You may well wonder, why are these distinctions of meaning important at this time?

Well, in light of the three angels’ message, the last message of mercy is to reveal God’s Character of Love. Not God’s character of “wrath, death and destruction”, which has been slanderously and libelously propagated throughout the ages.

Those who wait for the Bridegroom's coming are to say to the people, "**Behold your God.**" The last rays of merciful light, **the last message of mercy** to be given to the world, **is a revelation of His character of love.** The children of God are to manifest His glory. In their own life and character they are to reveal what the grace of God has done for them. {COL 415.5}

As Christians we know that we are to remove "judgment" from our thinking as applied to our fellow man. But we must also diligently examine how we see and pass intellectual judgment on the Father and Son;

Matthew 7:2 (KJV) For with **what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged:** and with **what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.**

The **love** and **honor** and perfection **revealed** in the **Gospel** are a **revelation to man of the character of God.** The **justice** and **goodness** and **benevolence** that were seen in the character of Christ are to be repeated in the lives of those who accept the privileges of the Gospel. By a study of the word, we are to see Him as He is, and, charmed with the view of His divine perfection, we are to grow into the same image. **We need to understand that the Gospel fully reveals the glory of the Lord. It is the mirror that reveals the character of God to the converted soul.**

The likeness of God is revealed in the perfect character of His Son, that we may understand what it means to be made in the likeness of the image of God, and what we may become if by constantly beholding we allow ourselves to be changed from "glory to glory." {ST February 24, 1909, par. 3}

The law is but a transcript of the character of God. Behold in your heavenly Father a perfect manifestation of the principles which are the foundation of His government. {MB 77.1}

If we are led to believe that the Father is not of the same character as His Son, or that His Son did not fully manifest the character of the law, then we

enter confusion on the character of Godliness. Jesus is our standard for understanding the Law and the Father. Man must be careful not to set his own standard. If we misjudge what Christ in humanity presented to us through the Gospel, then we risk having this judgment mirrored back to us, which is the nature of what resides in our heart.

When God's universal law and transcript of His character clearly states "Though shall not kill", do we believe that God is a liar and a hypocrite?

Satan did charge that God's Law and Government are evil;

The discord which his own course had caused in heaven, **Satan charged upon the law and government of God. All evil he declared to be the result of the divine administration.** He claimed that it was his own object to improve upon the statutes of Jehovah. Therefore it was necessary that he should demonstrate the nature of his claims, and show the working out of his proposed changes in the divine law. His own work must condemn him. Satan had claimed from the first that he was not in rebellion. The whole universe must see the deceiver unmasked. {GC 498.2}

Satan and the heavenly host know that God's character throughout time eternal does not, has not, and will not change.

As God's only Begotten Son, Christ kept His Father's commandments;

John 15:10 (KJV) 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.

And if you have seen Christ, then you have seen the Father;

John 14:7 (KJV) If ye had **known me**, ye should have **known my Father** also: and from henceforth **ye know him, and have seen him.**

With Christ and the Father, their character is unchangeable;

Hebrews 13:8 (KJV) Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever.

A direct attack on a leader's character with strong supporting evidence would normally be quite effective to impact the credibility of a government – and, if there was such evidence, this would have exposed God as a tyrant, liar and hypocrite.

However, in cases where the facts do not support charges, often the tactic of *character assassination* is employed to taint the credibility of an individual;

This misrepresentation of God's character is made to appear as truth, and thus through the temptation of the enemy men's hearts are hardened against God. **Satan charges upon God the very evil he himself** has caused men to commit by withholding their means from the suffering. He attributes to God his own characteristics. — The Review and Herald, June 26, 1894.

Satan Charged that the keeping of God's universal law by these newly created beings (man), who were created a little lower than the angels, would be impossible.

Now God would demonstrate to the universe the falsity of **Satan's charge that men could not keep God's law**. He would demonstrate that though man had sinned, he could so relate himself to God that he would have the mind and spirit of God. This holy man was selected to denounce the wickedness of the world, and to give evidence that man can keep the law. {RH April 15, 1909, par. 2}

Satan declared that it was **impossible** for the sons and daughters of Adam **to keep the law of God**, and thus charged upon God a lack of wisdom and love. If *they* could not keep the law, then there was fault with the Lawgiver. Men who are under the control of Satan repeat these accusations against God, in asserting that men can not keep the law of God. {ST January 16, 1896, par. 2}

Scriptural translations have contributed to this “moral inconsistency” about the universal loving character of God, when one compares the Old Testament with the New Testament and the behavior of Christ on earth.

Consider the Greek word: **Wrath**, however **Desire** (“as a reaching forth or excitement of the mind” in the Strong’s), is also a meaning for this same word (Strong’s Greek #3709 ‘orge’) and the word: **against** (Strong’s Greek#1909 ‘epi’) also means **towards** or **upon**.

Romans 1:18 (KJV) For the **wrath** of God is revealed from heaven **against** all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the **truth** in unrighteousness;

Then given John 14:6,

John 14:6 (KJV) Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.

substitute truth = Christ, and read,

Romans 1:18 For the **desire** of God is revealed from heaven **towards** all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold **Christ** in unrighteousness;

A warning is impressed upon how we see Christ as the visible manifestation of His Father.

This is not a unique instance in translation; the reader is invited to investigate occurrences where God appears as “**angry**”.

For instance, there are three Hebrew words that mean either “**Angry**” or “**Grieve**” (Strong’s Hebrew #2734 charah, #3707 kaac and #6087 atsab) ... could it be possible that translators inserted their bias towards making God angry, when in fact God was ‘grieved’? Remember:

James 1:20 (KJV) For the **wrath of man** worketh not the righteousness of God.

TRANSGRESSION

What is the transgression of God's Law? As the law is a transcript of God's character, it is therefore the transgression of God's Character. What is the transgression of God's Character? It is ultimately the belief that God cannot or will not pardon sin, when in actuality "his mercy endureth forever." Psalm 136.

As we read,

2 Corinthians 3:7-8 (KJV) But if the **ministration of death, written and engraven in stones, was glorious**, so that the children of Israel could not stedfastly behold the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance; which *glory* was to be done away: **How shall not the ministration of the spirit be rather glorious?**

Death comes consequentially by sin, which uses the law to do so.

Death is the wages of sin, and the law cannot be changed in the least to make a way of escape for its transgressor. {RH July 19, 1892, par. 1}

This provides the impression that death comes from God, while in contrast the law is holy, good and just.

Romans 7:11-13 (KJV) For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by **it slew me. Wherefore the law is holy**, and the commandment **holy, and just, and good**. Was then that which is good made death unto me? **God forbid**. But sin, that it might **appear sin, working death** in me by that which is good; that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful.

God is gracious; He labors continuously to impress minds that he will forgive them, remove the guilt, and heal the sin sick soul. But man finds it impossible to believe that forgiveness could be freely granted, causing

thinking to persist that we require 'blood and death', to which Christ willingly came to meet this fallacy of understanding:

Hebrews 9:22 (KJV) And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and **without shedding of blood is no remission.**

Galatians 3:24 (KJV) Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to *bring us* unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.

God wished to offer them repentance but with sin coursing through their flesh they simply could not accept it, they were just like Satan – unwilling to repent. Note that God did not immediately state to Adam and Eve: you have eaten of the tree of knowledge that I expressly commanded you should not eat, so now you must die.

God did not immediately expel Adam and Eve, until He first had a conversation with them,
"for the conscience must be enlightened by God." { 1MCP 324.1 }

Adam and Eve in transgression needed to be brought to their realization of their error, accept their dependency on the redeemer, and be brought back to God. As like us,

Many accept Jesus as an article of belief, but they have no saving faith in him as their Sacrifice and Saviour.

They have no realization that **Christ has died to save them from the penalty of the law which they have transgressed, in order that they may be brought back to loyalty to God.**

Do you believe that Christ, as your substitute, pays the debt of your transgression?

Not, however, that you may continue in sin, but **that you may be saved from your sins; that you, through the merits of his righteousness, may be re-instated to the favor of God.**

Do you know that **a holy and just God will accept your efforts to keep his law, through the merits of his own beloved Son who died for your rebellion and sin?** {RH July 24, 1888, par. 4}

God begins with a question, which is an opportunity for self-reflection. God already knows the answer, this was a call to repent and have their righteousness restored.

Divine inspiration asks many questions which the most profound scholar cannot answer. These questions were **not asked that we might answer them, but to call our attention** to the deep mysteries of God and **to teach us that our wisdom is limited**; that in the surroundings of our daily life **there are many things beyond** the comprehension of finite beings. {MH 431.2}

Romans 11:33 (KJV) O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable *are* his judgments, and his ways past finding out!

God had sought them out for repentance, but rather than the first couple taking open accountability, Adam and Eve played the blame game, Adam and Eve were now victims of the carnal mind.

2 Timothy 2:25 (KJV) In meekness instructing those that **oppose themselves**; if **God** peradventure **will give them repentance** to the **acknowledging of the truth**;

Let's examine a few highlights from **Sermon 11 by AT Jones**, from the **1895 "Righteousness by Faith"** series, to illustrate the challenges further:

"Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldst not eat?"

And he said, "Yes, I have, and I am inclined to think that it was not exactly right, and I am sorry."

Did he? Oh, no.

The question is, "Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldst not eat?" Hadn't he eaten of it?

Certainly he had.
Why didn't he say, "Yes?"

...

What was it in him, and about that, that would lead him to involve everybody else in the universe before himself, and before admitting that he had any part in it at all?

Nothing but love of self, self-defense, self-protection.

...

And the woman said, "The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat."
She answered the question the same way that he did.

The same thing that caused her to dodge the question and involve somebody else caused Adam to do that.

Everybody else must come in but themselves.

Now, I ask again, **why did they not answer the straight question straight?**

They could not do it.

And they could not do it because the mind with which they were actuated, which had taken possession of them, which held them in **bondage**, and **enslaved** them under its power, is the **mind** that originated **self-exaltation** in the place of God, and **never will allow itself the second place—even where God is.**

...

Now, that is why Adam and Eve could not answer that straight question straight.

Men could answer that question straight now.

But at that time they could not, for the reason that Satan had taken them under his dominion, and there was no other power to control them.

His control was absolute, and there at that moment was "**total depravity**".

...

This enmity toward sin, was not initially manifest in Adam and Eve immediately after eating the fruit, God in His mercy did not leave them in that state.

But God did not leave him there; He did not leave the race in that condition. He turns next and says to the serpent, "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel."

*Thus, there are two enmities in this world; one is from Satan, and is enmity against God; the other is from God, and is enmity against Satan. And through these two enmities, come the two mysteries — the mystery of God and the mystery of iniquity. **This enmity against Satan is the righteousness of God, of course.***

...

Genesis 3:15 (KJV) And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.

Christ is the source of every right impulse. He is the only one that can implant in the heart enmity against sin. Every desire for truth and purity, every conviction of our own sinfulness, is an evidence that His Spirit is moving upon our hearts. {SC 26.3}

...

And since that time, the man who will choose God's way, and yield his will to the control of God, can answer a straight question unto the Lord; so that when the Lord comes and asks, "Did you do so and so?" he can answer, "Yes," without bringing anybody else into it at all. This is confession of sin.

And thus came the ability to confess sin, and reveals the blessed truth that the power to confess sin — repentance — is the gift of God.

- AT Jones, 1895

This is even the same carnal condition with Cain. When he saw that his sacrifice was not accepted, Cain could have easily repented, humbly redoing the proper sacrifice, but in pride it was more convenient to simply kill Abel.

Satan hoped forever to gain Adam to unite with him in **murmuring against God** and in **rebelling** against **His authority**. Cain and Abel were representatives of the two great classes. Abel, as priest, in solemn faith offered his sacrifice.

Cain was willing to offer the fruit of his ground, but refused to connect with his offering the blood of beasts. **His heart refused to show his repentance for sin**, and his faith in a Saviour, by offering the blood of beasts.

He refused to acknowledge his need of a Redeemer. This, to his **proud heart**, was dependence and humiliation. {Con 22.2 }

But Abel, by faith in a future Redeemer, offered to God a more acceptable sacrifice than Cain. His offering the blood of beasts **signified that he was a sinner** and had **sins to put away**, and that he was **penitent** and **believed in the efficacy** of the blood of the future great offering.

Satan is the parent of unbelief, murmuring, and rebellion. He filled **Cain** with **doubt** and with **madness** against his innocent brother, **and against God** because his sacrifice was refused and Abel's was accepted. And he slew his brother in his insane madness. {Con 23.1}

Satan's pattern is consistent - rebel against God; while God is working with sinners to show and accept their condition in order for them to repent and draw them closer to Himself.

Adam's repentance, evidenced in his sorrow for his transgression, and his hope of salvation through Christ shown by his works in the sacrifices offered, was a **disappointment to Satan**. He **hoped** forever **to gain Adam to unite** with him in murmuring **against God**, and in **rebelling** against his authority.

Here were the representatives of the two great classes. Abel as priest offered in solemn faith his sacrifice. **Cain** was willing to offer the fruit of his ground, but refused to connect with his offering the blood of beasts. **His heart refused to show his repentance for sin and his faith in a Saviour** by offering the blood of beasts. He **refused to acknowledge his need of a Redeemer**. This to his proud heart was dependence and humiliation. {RH March 3, 1874, par. 3}

Satan, who is the father of lies, deceived Adam in a similar way, telling him that he need not obey God, that he would not die if he transgressed the law. But **Adam fell, and by his sin** he opened the floodgates of woe upon our world. **Again, Satan told Cain** that he need not follow expressly the command of God in presenting the slain lamb as an offering. **Cain obeyed** the voice of the **deceiver**; and because God did not accept his offering, while He showed His approval of Abel's offering, Cain rose up in anger and slew his brother. {Ev 598.1}

Given the life-changing consequences for this murderous act, Cain states

Genesis 4:13 (KJV) And Cain said unto the LORD, **My punishment is greater than I can bear.**

In the margin notes of Genesis 4:13 it reads: "MY INIQUITY IS GREATER THAN CAN BE FORGIVEN." That is to say, **my sin** is greater than can be forgiven; this is Satan's repeated unpardonable sin – that there is a sin that

cannot or will not be pardoned. This places an *apparent* flaw in God's mercy or compassion, which is a transgression in the understanding God's character.

Let's step back for a moment to examine a key issue faced in heaven.

REDEMPTION AND REJECTION IN HEAVEN

We read that Lucifer was familiar with God's law of stone tablets and that God's character is a consuming fire.

Ezekiel 28:12,14 (KJV) Thus saith the Lord GOD; Thou sealest up the sum, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty... Thou *art* the anointed cherub that covereth; and I have set thee so: thou wast upon the holy mountain of God; thou hast **walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire.**

Hebrews 12:29 (KJV) For our God *is* a consuming fire.

While in the midst of rebellion, God offered Satan pardon if he would repent and submit – there is no evidence that God commands the requirement of death for sin.

God in His great mercy bore long with Lucifer. He was not immediately degraded from his exalted station when he first indulged the spirit of discontent, nor even when he began to present his false claims before the loyal angels. Long was he retained in heaven. **Again and again he was offered pardon on condition of repentance and submission. Such efforts as only infinite love and wisdom could devise were made to convince him of his error.**

The spirit of discontent had never before been known in heaven. Lucifer himself did not at first see whither he was drifting; he did not understand the real nature of his feelings. But as **his dissatisfaction was proved to be without cause, Lucifer was convinced that he was in the wrong, that the divine claims were just, and that he ought to acknowledge them as such before all heaven.**

Had he done this, he might have saved himself and many angels. He had not at this time fully cast off his allegiance to God. Though he had forsaken his position as covering cherub, **yet if he had been**

willing to return to God, acknowledging the Creator's wisdom, and satisfied to fill the place appointed him in God's great plan, he would have been reinstated in his office. But pride forbade him to submit. He persistently defended his own course, maintained that he had no need of repentance, and fully committed himself, in the great controversy, against his Maker. {GC 495.3}

Lucifer could have been reinstated in his office given repentance.

All the heavenly host were summoned to appear before the Father, to have each case determined. Satan unblushingly made known his **dissatisfaction** that Christ should be preferred before him. He stood up proudly and urged that he should be equal with God, and should be taken into conference with the Father and understand his purposes.

God informed Satan that to his Son alone he would reveal his secret purposes, and he required all the family in Heaven, even Satan, to yield him implicit, unquestioned obedience; but that he (Satan) had proved himself unworthy a place in Heaven.

Then Satan exultingly pointed to his sympathizers, comprising nearly one half of all the angels, and exclaimed, **These are with me!** Will you expel these also, and make such a void in Heaven? He then declared that he was prepared to resist the authority of Christ, and to defend his place in Heaven by force of might, strength against strength. {1SP 22.2}

We read that near 50% of angels were dissatisfied, ultimately scripture states that 33% of angels fell.

Revelation 12:4 (KJV) And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth: and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born.

Angels are symbolized as stars,

Job 38:7 (KJV) When the morning **stars** sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?

Whose tail?

Isaiah 9:15 (KJV) The ancient and honourable, he *is* the head; and the **prophet that teacheth lies, he *is* the tail.**

Doing the math, from the almost 50% that were originally dissatisfied and then with the fall of 33%, this indicates that nearly 17% of angels who were dissatisfied repented and were reinstated.

Many of Satan's sympathizers were inclined to heed the counsel of the loyal angels, and repent of their dissatisfaction, and be again received to the confidence of the Father and his dear Son.
{1SP 20.2}

Satan persistently continues to wrongly claim that his dissent (and by implication the dissent of the angels with him) is beyond what God would forgive.

The mighty revolter then declared that **he was acquainted with God's law**, and if he should submit to servile obedience, **his honor would be taken from him. No more would he be intrusted with his exalted mission.**

He told them that himself and they also **had now gone too far to go back**, and he would brave the consequences; for **to bow in servile worship** to the Son of God he never would; **that God would not forgive**, and now they must assert their liberty and gain by force the position and authority which was not willingly accorded to them. {1SP 20.2}

So far as Satan himself was concerned, **it was true that he had now gone too far to return. But not so with those who had been blinded by his deceptions. . . . But pride, love for their leader, and**

the desire for unrestricted freedom were permitted to bear sway, **and the pleadings of divine love and mercy were finally rejected.** . . {CTr 12.5}

Ultimately, God can do no further to implore Satan and his followers to repent, and thus they fall from heaven.

Luke 10:18 (KJV) And he said unto them, **I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven.**

Jude 1:6 (KJV) And the angels which kept not their first estate, but **left** their own habitation...

Lucifer in heaven had sinned in the light of God's glory. To him as to no other created being was given a revelation of God's love. Understanding the character of God, knowing His goodness, Satan chose to follow his own selfish, independent will. This choice was final. **There was no more that God could do to save him.** DA 761, 762

THE CALL FOR DIVINE PUNISHMENT

In terms of “divine punishment” for sin, who decreed the “destruction of the soul”? That is, eternal death itself. This type of punishment could be considered the ultimate eternal instrument of justice, however,

The destruction of the soul was **NOT decreed by God.**

I must impress upon you to note the agency by which the soul is destroyed.

The soul’s destruction **cannot be laid to the charge of God.**

It cannot be said that he has made a decree against any man.

He does not cast darkness before the eyes of him who would see light. **The condition of the soul is in accordance with the seed sown.**

If we recklessly cast seed into the soil, **whatever may be its character**, the harvest will be after the **kind of seed** cast into the soil. {YI December 7, 1893, par. 2}

We see this in Scripture:

Proverbs 1:31 (KJV) Therefore shall **they eat of the fruit of their own way**, and be filled with their own devices.

Psalm 9:16 (KJV) The LORD is known by the judgment which he executeth: **the wicked is snared in the work of his own hands.**

How is the destruction of the soul achieved? Our words are like molten lead that “reflects” back upon our soul; this impresses upon our mind the heat of fire and brimstone.

Riches, power, genius, eloquence, pride, perverted reason, and passion, are enlisted as Satan’s agents in doing his work in making the broad road attractive, **strewn with tempting flowers.**

But every word they have spoken against the world's Redeemer will be reflected back upon them, and will one day burn into their guilty souls like molten lead.

They will be overwhelmed with terror and shame as they behold the exalted one coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. Then shall the bold defier, who lifted himself up against the Son of God, see himself in the true blackness of his character. The sight of the inexpressible glory of the Son of God will be intensely painful to those whose characters are stained with sin. **The pure light and glory emanating from Christ will awaken remorse, shame, and terror.** They will send forth wails of anguish to the rocks and mountains, "Fall on us, and hide us from the face of Him who sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb; for the great day of his wrath is come, and who shall be able to stand?" {RH April 1, 1875, par. 7}

"We read of chains of darkness for the transgressor of God's law. We read of the worm that dieth not, and of the fire that is not quenched. Thus, this represented the experience of every one who has permitted himself to be grafted into the stock of Satan, who has cherished sinful attributes. When it is too late, he will see that sin is the transgression of God's law. He will realize that because of transgression, **his soul is cut off from God**, and that God's wrath abides on him. **This is a fire unquenchable**, and by it every unrepentant sinner will be destroyed. Satan strives constantly to lead men into sin, and he who is willing to be led, who refuses to forsake his sins, and despises forgiveness and grace, will suffer the result of his course." {ST April 14, 1898, par. 13}

Who sought punishment for sin?

In the opening of the great controversy, **Satan** had declared that the law of God could not be obeyed, **that justice was inconsistent with mercy**, and that, **should the law be broken, it would be impossible for the sinner to be pardoned.**

Every sin must meet its punishment, urged Satan; {DA 761.4}

Satan is the accuser of the brethren, offering no pardon, no grace – this is the justice a nature that is dark in sin manifests,

and **if God should remit the punishment of sin, He would not be a God of truth and justice.**

When men broke the law of God, and defied His will, Satan exulted. It was proved, he declared, that the law could not be obeyed; **man could not be forgiven.**

Because he, after his rebellion, had been banished from heaven, **Satan claimed** that the human race must **be forever shut out from God's favor.**

God could not be just, he urged, and yet show mercy to the sinner. {DA 761.4}

Satan charged God with an unforgiving spirit, because he would not receive on terms of favor those who disobeyed his law and therefore misrepresented his character.{RH March 9, 1897, par. 4}

Even the Book of Esdras offers us an insight, that the destruction of the soul is without labor, that is, God does not have a destructive hand in this process.

2 Esdras {13:35} But he shall stand upon the top of the mount Zion. {13:36} And Zion shall come, and shall be shewed to all men, being prepared and builded, like as thou sawest the hill graven without hands.

{13:37} And this my Son shall rebuke the wicked inventions of those nations, which for their wicked life are fallen into the tempest;

{13:38} And shall **lay before them their evil thoughts**, and the torments wherewith they shall **begin to be tormented**, which are

like unto a flame: and he shall destroy them without labour by the law which is like unto me.

Why even consider Esdras as a source?

I saw that the Apocrypha was the hidden book, and that the wise of these last days should understand it. I saw that the Bible was the standard Book, that will judge us at the last day. I saw that heaven would be cheap enough, and that nothing was too dear to sacrifice for Jesus, and that we must give all to enter the kingdom. I heard an angel say, "Think ye God will place His seal where there is an idol? No, no." {16MR 34}

While Satan is making these condemnations and charges, he is slow to reveal his true intentions and character.

The condemning power of Satan would lead him to institute a theory of justice inconsistent with mercy. He claims to be officiating as the voice and power of God, claims that his decisions are justice, are pure and without fault. Thus, he takes his position on the judgment seat and **declares that his counsels are infallible. Here his merciless justice comes in, a counterfeit of justice, abhorrent to God.** {CTr 11.4}

But how shall the universe know that Lucifer is not a safe and just leader? **To their eyes he appears right.** They cannot see, as God sees, beneath the outward covering. They cannot know as God knows. **To work to unmask him and make plain to the angelic host that his judgment is not God's judgment,** that he has made a standard of his own and exposed himself to the righteous indignation of God, **would create a state of things that must be avoided.** {CTr 11.5}

It was on account of Satan's deceiving power that many angels became disloyal to God. God was true and right. Satan was wrong and he was convinced that he was wrong. He must now choose, either by submission to place himself on the Lord's side, or by lying

to sustain himself. By sophistry and fraud he appeared to gain an advantage, but it was only for a short time. **God cannot lie; He moves in a direct line.** Lucifer could speak the truth when it served his purpose best, but he could move in a crooked course to avoid humiliation and defeat.... {CTr 11.6}

Satan could not be presented to the universe at once in his real character. His crooked course must be allowed to continue until he should reveal himself **as an accuser, a deceiver, a liar, and a murderer.** In the latter act, Satan uprooted himself from the affection of the loyal universe. In the death of the Son of God the deceiver was unmasked. —Letter 16a, 1892. { CTr 11.7}

UNPARDONABLE SIN AND DEATH

Satan is essentially telling God how to run the universe, you need to show these mortals who is boss and like an earthly tyrannical father state: if you do not heed my commands, I will kill you! Satan claims that this is the only way to maintain order.

When men broke the law of God, and defied His will, Satan exulted. It was proved, he declared, that the law could not be obeyed; man could not be forgiven.

Every sin must meet its punishment, urged Satan; . {DA 761.4}

Just as Satan had rejected the pleadings and opportunity of mercy, grace and forgiveness in committing the **Unpardonable Sin**, we read:

In rejecting Christ the Jewish people **committed the unpardonable sin**; and **by refusing the invitation of mercy, we may commit the same error. We offer insult to the Prince of life**, and put Him to shame before the synagogue of Satan and before the heavenly universe when we refuse to listen to His delegated messengers, and instead **listen to the agents of Satan**, who would draw the soul away from Christ. So long as one does this, **he can find no hope or pardon**, and he will finally lose all desire to be reconciled to God. {DA 324.3}

If there is no hope or pardon, then death is final – whom is the owner/author for the power of death?

Satan is the author of death. What did Christ do after He brought Satan under the dominion of death? The very last words of Christ while expiring on the cross were, “It is finished” (John 19:30). The devil saw that he had overdone himself. Christ by dying accomplished the death of Satan and brought immortality to light. {FW 73.4}

Is it reasonable to believe that the Father and Son would use tools, namely death, from Satan's workshop? Can two walk together lest they agree?

Satan represents God's law of love as a law of selfishness. He declares that it is impossible for us to obey its precepts. The fall of our first parents, with all the woe that has resulted, he charges upon the Creator, leading men **to look upon God as the author of sin, and suffering, and death. Jesus was to unveil this deception.** As one of us He was to give an example of obedience. For this He took upon Himself our nature, and passed through our experiences. {DA 24.2}

THE ULTIMATE SACRIFICE

A penal system of punishment makes God devoid of agape love; that He would seek to have His beloved son die the most painful, wretched and humiliating death ... to simply have His honor restored – makes the Father sound like a very horrible, disturbed and deranged Being. This is Satan’s perverted teachings of atonement to placate a divine wrathful God.

We know that the consequence of sin is death:

Romans 6:23 (KJV) For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God *is* eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

and our Loving Merciful Father is NOT WILLING that any souls perish,

Now in Christ he saw God revealed in His true character—a **compassionate, merciful Father, not willing that any should perish**, but that all should come to Him in repentance, and have eternal life. {1SM 254.3}

all the while Satan casts his evil character upon God, and man readily accepts a God like himself.

Christ exposed Satan’s falsehoods and deceiving character, and in many hearts destroyed his corrupting influence. It was this that stirred Satan with such intense hatred. With his hosts of fallen beings he determined to urge the warfare most vigorously;

for there stood in the world One who was a perfect representative of the Father, One whose character and practices refuted Satan’s misrepresentation of God.

Satan had charged upon God the attribute[s] he himself possessed. {1SM 254.3}

We must recall, the father of murder and lies is Satan!

John 8:44 (KJV) Ye are of *your* father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, **because there is no truth in him**. When **he speaketh a lie**, he speaketh of his own: for he is a **liar**, and the **father** of it.

And how much does God and the Son love humanity?

John 3:16 (KJV) For God so loved the world, that he gave **his only begotten Son**, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but **have everlasting life**.

and for how long has He loved us, that He became a willing sacrifice for sin?

Revelation 13:8 (KJV) And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of **the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world**.

And what is the cost of redemption that was made worthy through the Lamb?

Never can the cost of our redemption be realized until the redeemed shall stand with the Redeemer before the throne of God. Then as the glories of the eternal home burst upon our enraptured senses we shall **remember that Jesus left all this for us**, that He not only **became an exile** from the heavenly courts, but **for us took the risk of failure and eternal loss**. Then we shall cast our crowns at His feet, and raise the song, “Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing.” Revelation 5:12. {DA 131.2}

Every soul, **pardoned of sin**, is precious in His sight—more precious than the whole world. It has been **purchased at infinite cost**, and **Christ will never abandon the soul for whom He has died**. {FLB 57.6}

Christ took our fallen nature and won the victory over death! To appreciate that this is truly a victory, we must understand that His victory comes in overcoming something that is foreign to us.

Hebrews 2:14 (KJV) Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, **he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death**, that is, the **devil**;

So why the sacrifice of Christ? Sinful humanity made it necessary, because of their need for evidence to satisfy humanities understanding of how the consequences of sin should be dealt with.

God Meets Us Where We Are—“With the pure Thou wilt shew Thyself pure; and with the froward Thou wilt shew Thyself froward”—that is, as **God meets us where we are**, so we are to meet men where they are. Let us not, by refusing to meet our fellow-men where they are, place ourselves outside the compass of God’s love and mercy (Manuscript 116, 1902) {3BC 1143.5}

The transgression of God’s law made **the death of Christ essential** to save man and yet maintain **the dignity and honor of the law**. Christ took upon Himself the condemnation of sin. He opened His bosom to the woes of man. He who knew no sin became sin for us. {FLB 104.4}

What about the statements that seem to be written in the language of substitutionary or penal atonement, or that God the Father required appeasement for the stain on His character?

This is in the language we comfortably understand “God did punish, kill, wrath etc.” However this is really being language reflected back to us from our heart.

James 1:23 (KJV) For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, **he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass:**

The real cost of salvation;

The intercession of Christ in man's behalf in the sanctuary above is **as essential to the plan of salvation as was His death upon the cross.** By His death He began that work which after His resurrection He ascended to complete in heaven. We must by faith enter within the veil, "whither the forerunner is for us entered." Hebrews 6:20. There the light from the cross of Calvary is reflected. There we may gain a clearer insight into the mysteries of redemption. **The salvation of man is accomplished at an infinite expense to heaven; the sacrifice made is equal to the broadest demands of the broken law of God.** Jesus has opened the way to the Father's throne, and through His mediation the sincere desire of all who come to Him in faith may be presented before God. {GC 489.1}

Reading from our heart, it appears the Law demands death.

Jesus suffered the extreme penalty of the law for our transgression, and justice was fully satisfied. The law is not abrogated; it has not lost one jot of its force. Instead, it stands forth in holy dignity, **Christ's death** on the cross testifying to its immutability. Its **demands** have been **met**, its **authority maintained.** {HP 15.3}

Was the penalty remitted because He was the Son of God? Were the vials of wrath withheld from Him who was made sin for us? Without abatement the penalty fell upon our divine-human Substitute. {18MR 336.2}

Hear His cry, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" He was treated as a sinner that we might be treated as righteous, that God might be just and yet the justifier of the sinner. {18MR 336.3}

I ask the impenitent, what greater evidence do you want that God is a God of justice? If the sword of justice woke in its might against the Fellow of the Almighty, **and was not sheathed until bathed in**

the blood of God's only begotten Son, what will be the punishment of those who refuse to accept the atoning sacrifice?

When the Son of God interposed in man's behalf, and humbled Himself on Calvary, angels drew back in amazement. Can those for whom this great sacrifice was made escape the wrath of God if they are indifferent to this great salvation? Those who choose to continue in sin will be without a shadow of excuse. Calvary is the only argument that will be used against them. {18MR 336.4}

What are the implications? At the surface, God murdered His own son.

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This is penal substitution language.

Christ was to die as man's substitute. Man was a criminal under the sentence of death for transgression of the law of **God as a traitor, a rebel**; hence a substitute for man must die as a malefactor, because he stood in the place of the traitors, with all their treasured sins upon his divine soul. It was not enough that Jesus should die in order **to fully meet the demands of the broken law, but he died a shameful death**. The prophet gives to the world his words, "I hid not my face from shame and spitting." {RH July 5, 1887, par. 8 }

This is Satan's justice without mercy.

Every manifestation of God's power for His people arouses the enmity of Satan. Every time God works in their behalf, Satan with his angels works with renewed vigor to compass their ruin. **He is jealous of all who make Christ their strength**. His object is **to instigate evil**, and when he has succeeded, throw all the **blame**

upon the tempted ones. He points to **their filthy garments**, their **defective characters**. He presents their **weakness** and **folly**, their sins of **ingratitude**, their unlikeness to Christ, which have dishonored their Redeemer. **All this he urges** as an argument proving his **right to work his will in their destruction**. He endeavors to affright their souls with the thought that their case is hopeless, **that the stain of their defilement can never be washed away**. He hopes so to destroy their faith that they will yield fully to his temptations, and turn from their allegiance to God. {COL 168.1}

In order to convince us the Father allowed us to understand events in a sense of justice that we understood that we might believe we could be forgiven.

“Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.” Here is language that expresses His mind toward a corrupt and idolatrous people: “How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? how shall I deliver thee, Israel? how shall I make thee as Admah? how shall I set thee as Zeboim? Mine heart is turned within Me, My repentings are kindled together.” Must He give up the people for whom such a provision has been made, even His only-begotten Son, the express image of Himself? **God permits His Son to be delivered up for our offenses. He Himself assumes toward the Sin Bearer the character of a judge, divesting Himself of the endearing qualities of a father.** {TM 245.2}

Consider that Christ’s sacrifice is to “restore our relationship” to the Father.

His righteousness He would impute to man, and **thus raise him in moral value with God**, so that his efforts **to keep the divine law would be acceptable**. **Christ’s work was to reconcile man to God** through His human nature, **and God to man** through His divine nature. {1SM 272.5}

In context, God knows all things related to the heart,

1 John 3:20 (KJV) For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things.

By definition the term omniscient (*all-knowing*) imposes a defined limit. We instead read of an “Infinite Knowledge” which is certainly *infinitely greater* than our understanding,

Psalm 147:5 (KJV) Great *is* our Lord, and of great power(*a*): his understanding *is* infinite.

(a) of his understanding there is no number

Christ’s mission on earth bore the risk of an eternal loss between the Father and Son, that risk would not exist in an *all-knowing* condition, but that risk could exist in the framework of *infinite knowledge*;

Satan in heaven had **hated Christ** for His position in the courts of God. He **hated Him** the **more** when he himself was **dethroned**. He **hated Him** who pledged **Himself to redeem** a race of sinners. Yet into the world where Satan claimed dominion **God permitted His Son** to come, a helpless babe, subject to the weakness of humanity. **He permitted Him** to meet life’s peril in **common** with every human soul, **to fight the battle** as every child of humanity must fight it, **at the risk of failure and eternal loss.** {DA 49.1}

The identification of this risk, demonstrates that the plan of salvation was not simply a rote fulfilment of omniscience, but was made available through Divine Mercy and Agape Love for fallen humanity.

The guilt Christ bore at the cross is from the unbelief that God cannot pardon our sins. Christ (as Adam and Eve) saw the shadow separate himself and the Father, meaning death.

Everything in nature was pure and undefiled.... **Not a shadow interposed between them [Adam and Eve] and their Creator.** They knew God as their beneficent Father, and in all things their will was conformed to the will of God.... {ML 323.3 }

Matthew 27:46 (KJV) And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, **My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?**

With Christ on the cross, Satan's disguise was removed for the universe to behold the author of death.

Satan saw that his disguise was torn away. His administration was laid open before the unfallen angels and before the heavenly universe. **He had revealed himself as a murderer.** {DA 761.2}

As the murderer, Satan,

By shedding the blood of the Son of God, he had uprooted himself from the sympathies of the heavenly beings. {DA 761.2}

Satan was clothed in blackness of sin.

Henceforth his work was restricted. **Whatever attitude he might assume, he could no longer await the angels as they came from the heavenly courts, and before them accuse Christ's brethren of being clothed with the garments of blackness and the defilement of sin.**

The last link of sympathy between Satan and the heavenly world was broken. {DA 761.2}

And while Christ had felt all the crushing weight of humanity's unbelief, Christ's faith in the Fathers' Love for Him still managed to ascend heavenward!

Luke 23:46 (KJV) And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit: and having said thus, he gave up the ghost.

The Saviour could not see through the portals of the tomb. Hope did not present to Him His coming forth from the grave a conqueror, or tell Him of the Father's acceptance of the sacrifice. He feared that **sin was so offensive to God that Their separation was to be eternal.** Christ felt the anguish which the sinner will feel when mercy shall no longer plead for the guilty race. It was the sense of sin, bringing the Father's wrath upon Him as man's substitute, that made the cup He drank so bitter, and broke the heart of the Son of God. {DA 753.2}

We all receive Life, from Him - that is Life,

John 3:16 (KJV) For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

John 11:25 (KJV) Jesus said unto her, **I am the resurrection, and the life:** he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live:

1 John 1:1-3 (KJV) That which was **from the beginning**, which we have **heard**, which we have **seen** with our eyes, which we have **looked** upon, and our **hands** have handled, of **the Word of life**; (For the life was manifested, and we have seen *it*, and bear witness, and shew unto you that **eternal life**, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;) That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship *is* with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.

What is the final enemy to be conquered?

1 Corinthians 15:26 (KJV) The last **enemy** *that* shall be destroyed *is* **death**.

God does not throw people in the lake of fire unto death. God would then be a guilty hypocrite to the testament of His character. Indeed, a hypocritical God as that, would certainly not be worthy of any bended knee, veneration, worship or service.

Death is in, and of this world, and the righteous are to have no love for the things of this world.

1 John 2:15 (KJV) Love not the world, neither the things *that are* in the **world**. If any man love the **world**, the love of the Father is not in him.

Romans 5:12 (KJV) Wherefore, as by one man **sin** entered into the **world**, and **death** by **sin**; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:

Revelation 20:13 (KJV) And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and **death and hell delivered up the dead** which **were in them**: and they were judged every man according to their works.

Since death is not of any divine creation, it is finally destroyed.

Revelation 20:14 (KJV) And **death and hell were cast into the lake of fire**. This is the second death.

Christ is fully Love and Life, not death.

The gospel of Christ has little to fear from its open opponents. Its most dangerous foes are the pretended friends of Christ, who say, "I go," but do not go. They profess to love the Lord Jesus, but **through the deceptions of Satan, they work against Christ**, because **they are not doers of the word**. He who is a friend of Christ studies the word of God, and brings its principles into his daily life, making every thought, word, and deed subject to the control of the Spirit of God. **Such a man will be a man of discernment; he will have spiritual eyesight, and will not be ignorant of Satan's devices**. The love of God is in his heart, and the love of his fellow-men. Who can measure the loss we sustain by neglecting to obey the words of Christ? **He is life to the dead and wisdom to the ignorant**. It is by his righteousness that we are connected with God. {YI June 14, 1894, par. 1}

Song of Solomon 8:6 (KJV) Set me as a seal upon thine heart, as a seal upon thine arm: **for love is strong as death**; jealousy *is* cruel as the grave: the coals thereof *are* coals of fire, *which hath* a most vehement flame.

Proving that He is the Restorer, not the destroyer.

Though He is the restorer of fallen humanity, yet “He telleth the number of the stars; He calleth them all by their names. Great is our Lord, and of great power: **His understanding is infinite**. The Lord lifteth up the meek: He casteth the wicked down to the ground. Sing unto the Lord with thanksgiving; sing praise upon the harp unto our God.... The Lord taketh pleasure in them that fear Him, in those that hope in His mercy. Praise the Lord, O Jerusalem; praise thy God, O Zion.” {FE 370.1}

The Cross, its Depth of Compassion through God the Father and His Beloved Begotten Son;

If those who today are teaching the word of God, would **uplift the cross of Christ higher** and still higher, their ministry would be far more successful. If **sinners** can be led to **give one earnest look at the cross**, if they can **obtain a full view of the crucified Saviour**, they will **realize** the depth of **God’s compassion and the sinfulness of sin**. {AA 209.2}

I want, brethren and sisters, that **we should come right to the cross** and seek **Christ and His love, mercy, and compassion**, and **see how He values the human soul**. **You can never measure it, except as you come to the cross**. {9MR 64.1}

It is evident that God did not institute the penalty of death for sin. When Satan lied to the fallen angels and man, to tell them - God would not forgive - he became the author of death and wields the power of death. Christ yielded Himself up to the penalty, that the sin-clouded mind of man demanded.

All should **be intelligent** in regard to the agency **by which the soul is destroyed**. It is **not because of any decree** that **God** has sent out **against man** {2SAT 183}

Christ never planted the seeds of death in the system. **Satan planted these seeds** when he tempted Adam **to eat** of the **tree of knowledge** which **meant disobedience to God** (MS 65, 1899) {1BC 1082.5}

It was the only way that mankind could accept that God would indeed forgive them. Christ paid the penalty the penalty for our understanding, so that we could then really believe that God would forgive us. Such depth of sacrifice in love, an amazing divine love for a fallen world. Amen.

Exposing the Penalty of Sin

The Bible tells us that the wages of sin is death. The question that must be asked is who pays these wages?

The majority of the Christian world believes that God will destroy the wicked, burning them in hell. The majority believe that God will burn them for eternity while a few believe that God simply turns them to ashes upon the ground. Either way, all believe that God is the one who actively inflicts death and destruction upon the wicked Himself.

What does the Bible reveal on this subject? If God does the final killing of the wicked why are we told that Satan has the power of death in Hebrews 2:14? If God tells us in the commandments “thou shalt not kill” and Christians believe that it is the Spirit of God that dwells in the heart of the Christian then how can God kill and this character trait not be present in the heart of the believer? And if we are changed to what we behold, what will we become if we behold God as putting Billions of people to death?

We invite you to carefully consider these questions as you read this booklet.