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The Decalogue Before and After Sinai - Part II

The Law of God Before He Proclaimed Upon Mount Sinai

How old is sin? Most Bible-reading Christians will say, as old as Adam and Eve. They are partially right. Why partially? Insofar as humanity is concerned (contrary to the theory of evolution which arose after creation and is its counterfeit), Adam and Eve were the origin of mankind, being the *first and last* human, and only living beings created “in God’s image and likeness” by Creator by literally forming them from the dust of the ground (Adam) and from one of the ribs of Adam (Eve).

Last created beings because the Creator endowed the first couple with the power to *procreate* or to reproduce “after their own kind” in order to fulfill God’s original divine plan “to replenish the earth,” that is, to replicate both Adam and Eve---the first couple, the first parents, and their children as the original family including the original garden of Eden home---and populate the whole earth in their original sinless, unfallen state. We know what happened. They sinned and fell in Eden, on earth.

But the angels, including Lucifer, were created before the earth and Adam and Eve were. The Bible does not tell us when or how long before but it informs us that they were created in heaven to serve a different divine purpose—to be “ministering spirits” to minister or “serve” the Godhead, whatever needs there are in heaven (the “home of angels”) and throughout God’s entire universe. They created from *spirit*, not from the *dust* of the ground, as Adam was. We also know what ultimately happened in heaven. Led by Lucifer, the highest of angels, a third of the angels waged the first rebellion and war against “Michael and His angels.” They lost and fell, both from their high estate as angels and literally as they were cast out of heaven and “fell” to the earth, yet uncorrupted and uncursed.

But both angels and man sinned. And as apostle Paul emphasized, sin is not imputed where there is no law! **“For until the law sin was in the world, but sin is not imputed when there is no law.” Rom. 5: 13, KJV.** John made it even clearer: Sin is the transgression of the Law! **“Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law.” 1 John 3: 4, KJV.** But this we must bear in mind: while a plan of salvation (of the gospel) was planned and devised among the Godhead “before the foundations of the earth were laid,” no such plan was devised for angels. A brief summary of why this is so, is here given:

“And the angels who did not keep their proper domain, but left their own habitation, He (God) has reserved in everlasting chains under darkness for the judgment of the great day [that is, when they are finally burned to oblivion at the end of the Biblical millennium].” Jude 6, KJV.

This much is clear then to all who truly believe that the Bible is God’s infallible word and the final arbiter of what is eternal truth: God’s law existed *before* anything created, whether animate or inanimate, else did because the angels would not have violated, disobeyed and thus transgressed anything that would have caused their fall, resulting in their eternal banishment from perfect heaven and the irreversible sentence of eternal damnation. Neither would have Adam and Eve, in their yet unfallen and sinless state in perfect Eden disobeyed and transgressed anything that would have caused the consequence of losing their robe of innocence, engage in blaming one another and God himself, and become the first sinners on earth. They, too, were banished from their Eden home. God stationed cherubim wielding “flaming swords that turned everywhere” at the entrance of Eden, preventing Adam and Eve, now in their fallen, sinful human nature, from reentering and partaking of the fruits of the tree of life, the one and only kind of tree, which God had vested with life-perpetuating properties.

Thus, mankind was and is assured (take notice Christianity today) that there is no such thing as an “eternal sinner.” Thank God sin is not a forever thing but God’s law is forever, immutable and unchanging, even as the Lawgiver is Himself eternal, unchanging, and, as the “great I Am” is not subject to time.

What Calvary and the Cross of Christ Truly Means

Like every single truth contained in the gospel of the plan of salvation for fallen mankind, Satan immediately attacked the meaning, purpose and substance of the atonement (beginning with the sacrificial aspect). Satan introduced the counterfeit of the atoning sacrifice Jesus inaugurated in Eden in the first promise and promise given in Genesis 3: 15, to redeem the sinner from the curse of the law against sin.

This the deceiver achieved by immediately corrupting the true meaning and application, thus the efficacy of animal/blood sacrifices that distinctly distinguished the Abel-worship from the Cain-worship and on to the Mosaic dispensation (with its system of sacrifices), which *all pointed forward as types and shadows of the ultimate, antitypical sacrifice the life and blood of the Creator* incarnate, at Calvary as “the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world. This resulted in the earliest forms perverted and cruel forms of heathen and pagan forms of worship that caused the apostasies of Israel and Judah and were carried forward into the opening of the Christian dispensation, to our time, and onwards till the close of time as the apex of false worship and counterfeit religion. Ellen G. White says (emphasis mine):

“Those only who realize that the cross is the center of hope for the human family can understand the gospel that Christ taught. He came to this world for no other purpose than to place man on vantage ground before the world and the heavenly universe. He came to bear

testimony that fallen beings, through faith in His power and efficacy as the Son of God [divine nature], may become partakers of the divine nature.

He alone could make atonement [at-one-ment] for sinners and open the gates of paradise to the fallen race. He took on Himself, not the nature of angels, but the nature of man, and in this world lived a life untainted by sin.

‘The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us (and we held His glory, the glory as of the Only Begotten of the Father) full of grace and truth.’ ‘As many as receive Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name.’ John 1: 14, 12, KJV.

By His life and death Christ taught that only in obedience to God’s commandments can man find safety and true greatness. ‘The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul.’ Ps. 19: 7. God’s law is a transcript of His character.” - Ellen G. White, Vol. 8 *Testimonies*, p. 207.

Note that Christianity has departed so wide of the truths of the Bible today that it teaches the exact opposite meaning of Christ’s *life and death* in relation to obedience to His law of Ten commandments, claiming that:

(1) Only Christ could perfectly obey the law in His life—because He was “God-man” and therefore He alone had that kind of power to obey the law perfectly, in effect accusing God and Jesus of requiring man to do the impossible in the command, “Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect.” Matt 5: 48, etc. Some say that the command to obey and keep God’s commandments is merely a “good advise” or

(2) By His death, they egregiously allege, He “crucified the law” by “nailing it to the cross.” But what does the Word of God teach? Christ Himself the Law-giver “was *made to be sin for* us who knew *no sin*; that *we* might be made the righteousness of Christ of God in Him” (2 Cor. 5: 21). Thusly, being the only sinless Man in the flesh, that is, God literally in the human flesh, became fallen mankind’s Sin-bearer, not “Sin-committter.”

Since “the wages of sin is death” (Rom. 6: 23), He, “the righteous One of Israel,” took the place of the sinner as the latter’s substitute and surety and died on the cross instead of the sinner who deserves death. By Himself *submitting* to the demands of His own law—that “the wages of sin,” which is “the transgression of the law, “is death,” the life of the transgressor being demanded by His law, God Himself in the flesh as the “second Adam,” proved to Satan, “the adversary of God and man,” “to men, angels, the world” and from eternity to eternity that the law of heaven, the foundation of His eternal throne, the law that governs the whole unfallen heavenly universe, *is* immutable, unalterable, whose original importance and role remains undiminished, and is as fresh, durable, righteous, holy and eternal as its Author; it is beyond abrogation by any creature in heaven or on earth. In fact, at the cross, Christ fulfilled a specific prophecy regarding His lifework mission on earth.

Just before His death, Jesus declared of Himself to His disciples: “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.” John 15: 10, KJV. Instead of doing away with the law or lessening its importance as the revealer of sin and transcript of His character, Christ “the second Adam” (1 Cor. 14: 45-48), “magnified the law and made it honorable”

(Isa. 42: 21). No wonder David, whom Bible calls “a man after God’s own heart” (that is, when and while he remained, simple, humble and was living in harmony with God’s revealed will) exclaimed and wrote (read the whole chapter of Psalms 119).

“Open Thou mine eyes that I may see wondrous things out of Thy law.” Ps. 119: 18, KJV. “The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul . . . More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold; sweeter also than the honey and the honeycomb.” Ps. 19: 7-10. “Great peace have they which love Thy law: and nothing shall offend them” Ps. 119: 165).

To emphasize the unchanging, immutable nature of the Decalogue, note the following experience when the law, which was in existence before the foundation of the world, was first to be given in written form by the God himself to Moses, and Moses to the people. When Moses descended from Sinai, together with Joshua, after receiving the ten commandments, written on two tables of stone by Jehovah’s own finger, he (and Joshua) were met with a most revolting sight as they neared the camp. The Israelites who he left in the care of his older brother Aaron, were carrying on the blasphemous worship (including lascivious “standing up and playing”) of the golden calf, the Egyptian symbol of the sun-god *Ra*. Stirred with righteous indignation, Moses literally hurled the original two tables of stone on which was inscribed the Ten commandments.

At first blush it would seem odd that God did not even rebuke him for his seemingly rash, temperamental and even “blasphemous” act committed before all the people. Nothing could be further from the truth. Why? Because it was in fact, graphically symbolic of what Israel had just done in making a golden calf and worshipping it as they did in Egypt as slaves at the same time Moses was in the mount receiving the very law of God!

God’s ancient chosen people were breaking the very law they said they would keep, while it was being given to their earthly leader! But while the *tables of stone* on which the law was written were broken and shattered the law in itself was by no means broken! Instead, it condemned them. Proof? This time, Jehovah ordered Moses to make another set of two tables of stone upon God wrote the same commandments with the same finger the second time. Then God commanded Moses to assemble the Israel and determine who had not participated in the abominable worship of the golden calf, thus breaking God’s law so recently given.

All, except the tribe of Levi, were found not to have joined in the terrible apostasy! Then God, through Moses, commanded the Levites to slay both the trouble-making “mixed multitude” as well as their own brethren who had participated in the apostasy! The apostates broke God’s law but the law in itself stood intact and unbroken, as authoritative, immutable and unyielding in its efficacy and application as it had ever been through eternity as the foundation of God’s eternal throne. The offenders suffered the terrible consequences of breaking the law, and God saw to it that they never forgot it!

On the other hand, the same law that condemned those who broke it, justified as righteous those who did not break it! The faithfulness and obedience of the tribe of Levi was rewarded by God setting them apart from the other tribes to serve at the tabernacle/temple/sanctuary in support of the sacred work and office of the priesthood placed exclusively on Aaron and his sons.

“It [the law] was given to man in the beginning as the standard of obedience. In succeeding ages this law was lost sight of. Hundreds of years after the Flood Abraham was called, and to him was given the promise that his descendants should exalt God’s law. In the course of time the Israelites went into Egypt, where for many years they suffered grievous oppression in the hands of the Egyptians. After they had been in slavery for nearly four hundred years, God delivered them by a wonderful manifestation of His power. He revealed Himself to the Egyptians as the Ruler of the universe, One greater than all their heathen deities.”

“At Sinai the law was given a second time. In awful grandeur the Lord spoke His precepts and with His own finger engraved the Decalogue upon tables of stone [not diamond, gold, silver or any of the precious stones, or “rare” metals!].

“Passing down through the centuries, we find that there came a time when God’s law must once more be unmistakably revealed as the standard of obedience. Christ came to vindicate the sacred claims of the law. He came to live a life of obedience to its requirements and thus prove the falsity of the charge made by Satan that it is impossible for man to keep the law of God.”

NOTE: Anyone repeating words or ideas that suggest and even declare that it is impossible to perfectly keep God’s law, is but echoing and magnifying the accusations and deceptive words of Satan who is “the adversary or enemy of God and man.”

“As a man He (Jesus) met temptation and overcame in the strength given Him from God [not in His own incarnated human nature strength]. As He went about doing good, healing all who were afflicted by Satan, He made plain to men the character of God’s law and the nature of His service [or ministry]. His life testifies that it is possible for us also to obey the law of God.

“Never did Christ deviate from loyalty to the principles of God’s law. Never did He do anything contrary to the will of His Father. Before angels, men, and demons He could speak words that from any other lips would have been blasphemy. ‘I do always those things that please Him.’ John 8: 29. Day by day for three years His enemies followed Him, trying to find some stain in His character. Satan, with all his confederacy of evil, sought to overcome Him; but they found nothing in Him by which to gain advantage. Even the devils were forced to confess ‘Thou art the Holy One of God.’” – Ibid, Vol. 8 Testimonies, pp. 206, 207.

See Genesis 2: 17; 3: 1-7. Eve coveted the fruit of the forbidden tree and then stole. cf. Patriarchs and Prophets, pp. 55, 56:

“Satan represented to the holy pair that they would be *gainers* by breaking the law of God. Do we not today hear similar reasoning? *Many talk of the narrowness of those who obey God’s commandments*, while they themselves claim to have broader ideas, and to enjoy greater liberty. What is this but an echo of the voice from Eden, ‘In the day ye eat thereof,’--- transgress the divine requirement---‘ye shall be as gods’? Satan claimed to have received great good by eating the forbidden fruit, but he did not let it appear that *by transgression he had become an outcast from heaven*. Though he had found sin to result in infinite loss, he *concealed his own misery, in order to draw others into the same position*. So now the transgressor seeks to *disguise* his true character; he may claim to be holy; but his exalted profession only makes him the more dangerous as a deceiver. *He is on the side of Satan, trampling upon the law of God, and leading others to do the same, to their eternal ruin.*

“Eve really *believed* the words of Satan, but her belief did not save her from the penalty of sin. She *disbelieved* the words of God, and this was what led to her fall.

NOTE: Eve and her life experience as the woman, in relation and in contrast to the man, and wife, in relation and in contrast to her husband, is the most fundamental type of the generic church “woman,” whether apostate, the commandment-keeping remnant, or the overcoming remnant—depending on their spiritual conditions, as revealed in prophecy and ascertained by their histories. If church members or the “host of worshippers” comprised of its adherents and believers sincerely and honestly believe and thus choose to obey what their official spiritual guardians---their finite, mortal fellow sinners---claim to be “truth” but contradict what the Scriptures say, they, like Eve, will similarly and invariably find that their sincerity, honesty and belief will not save them from the curse of the penalty of the law!

“Sin lay at the door of Cain’s heart’

The KJV reads: “And the Lord said unto Cain, Why art thou wroth? And why is thy countenance fallen? If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? And if thou doest not well, *sin lieth at the door*, and unto thee shall be his desire, and thou shalt rule (*master*, margin) rule over him.” Gen. 4: 7. The NKJV reads better: “So the Lord said to Cain, Why are you angry? And why has your countenance fallen? If you *do well*, will you not be accepted? And if you *do not do well*, *sin lies at the door* [of your heart/mind], And its [sin] desire is for you, but you should *rule* over it.” Gen. 4: 6, 7.

On “doing well” or “not doing well” as pointed out in the above scriptures, note what the apostle in the New Testament says its relationship is to *sin*, sin being the transgression of the law: “Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is *sin*.” James 4: 17, KJV. The NKJV reads: “Therefore, to him who knows to do good and does not do it, to him it is sin.”

Proper and adequate knowledge is key to correctly interpreting and thus truly understanding anything worth knowing and remembering, central of which is, “the

truth as it is in Jesus.” This includes knowing what sin is as well as its consequences and effects, both immediate and eternal so we will know how to deal with it victoriously. God does not condemn anyone for committing sin in ignorance but neither does He diminish its evil, hateful sinful nature. Never does He condone it in any manner of form regardless of changing dispensations or doctrinal changes by the churches; rather, through the apostles, He says: “Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked [*winked at*, KJV], but now commands all men everywhere to repent. [Why?]. Because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness, by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance this to all by raising Him from the dead.” Acts 17: 30, 31, NKJV.

NOTE: Christ’s resurrection, among many other truths, is the assurance that God never ignores or belittles sin, and that there is an appointed day for the judgment of the world and its individual inhabitants. Only by God’s law can one obtain a knowledge of sin, without having to commit it. Adam and Eve “learned it the hard way,” by experience! Paul said, “I had not known sin till the law said, thou shalt not commit adultery” (citing the seventh commandment of the Decalogue).”

Law and Grace

The misconception causing “gross darkness to cover the earth,” particularly the Christian church, is the result of Satan’s success in making the Bible say what it doesn’t say regarding what law and grace are. The results are self-evident. The world and the churches have become lawless and if they claim to follow a law, it is actually man-made laws and thus act as “a law unto themselves,” as did the Pharisees in Christ’s time.

The law of God. - The law of God is not for the purpose of *saving the sinner from sin*. Its role, aside from being the foundation of His eternal throne in heaven and the transcript of His character of love, mercy and righteousness, thus, the standard of moral and spiritual character is that of a “mirror” that reveals and exposes man’s every departure from the precepts and principles enunciated, “magnified and made honorable” by Christ in His life and works on earth.

Sin, the mystery of iniquity. To man who are fallen, Paul says, “the strength of sin is the law,” and of course, “the sting of sin is death” (1 Cor. 15: 56) for “the wages of sin is death,” sin being the “transgression of the law.” Rom. 6: 23; 1 John 3: 4. The untranslated Greek for “strength” means “miraculous power.” By the “wages” of “death” this “miraculous power” is not the one anyone would desire to see much less experience! God’s servant provides us a magnified view of sin in the following:

“To many minds the origin of sin and the reason for its existence are a source of great perplexity. In their interest in these questions, *the truths plainly revealed in God’s word and essential to salvation are neglected*; and the fact that the Scriptures furnish no explanation, is seized upon as an excuse for rejecting the words of the Holy Writ. *It is impossible to explain the origin of sin, or to give a reason for its existence.* It is an intruder, for whose existence no reason can be given. It is mysterious, unaccountable; to excuse it, is to defend it. Could it be

excused, could a cause be shown for its existence, it would cease to be sin. Our only definition of sin is that given in the word of God; it is the transgression of the law.” - *Ellen G. White, Vol. 4, Spirit of Prophecy, 1884, Origin of Evil chapter XXIV, Pacific Press, Oakland; Review & Herald, Battle Creek, Mich., p. 316.*

The author above is right. None of the writers of the Bible attempted to explain the origin of sin itself, only that we are told from whom it originated from, Lucifer, who fell and became Satan, the prince of devils. It will remain a mystery as the “mystery of iniquity” but the “mystery of godliness” is wonderfully revealed in the incarnation of the Creator, and its glory, “which had been hid for ages,” one into which the angels desired to look into” was, and is declared to be, “Christ in you, the hope of glory” (Col. 1: 16, 17).

The grace of God in Christ. Grace, on the other hand is the “power of God unto salvation,” the power from the Father in the Son as imparted by the Holy Spirit by which any and all penitent, believing and hopeful sinners can resist and overcome Satan, temptation, “the love of the world, the lust of the flesh and the eye and the pride of life,” and to *keep him from falling and sinning*, while in his yet sinful nature and corrupt physical nature on fallen, cursed earth.

“When Cain saw that his offering was rejected, he was *angry with the Lord and with Abel*; he was angry that God did not accept *man’s substitute in place of the sacrifice divinely provided*, and *angry with his brother for choosing to obey God, instead of joining in rebellion against Him*. Notwithstanding Cain’s disregard of the divine command, *God did not leave him to himself; but He condescended to reason with the man who had shown himself so unreasonable.*” Patriarchs & Prophets, p. 73.

Emphasis: Cain’s unrighteous anger was of two-fold: the one directed towards God and the one towards man---both of whom were guiltless and totally undeserving of his murderous anger and accusation over a specific issue: the controversy over a the first “bone of contention”--- worship, thus, religion! It was the same basic issue that precipitated the first war that took place in *heaven* between “Michael and His angels and Lucifer and his angels.” (Rev. 12: 7-9). The Hebrew *satan* means “adversary,” “to cherish animosity;” the Greek transliteration from the Hebrew and Aramaic are *Satan* and *Satanas*, meaning, “the great adversary of God and of man” (Rev. 12: 7-12), otherwise commonly called ‘the devil’ (Matt. 4: 10, 11; Rev. 12: 9), Beelzebub (Matt. 12: 24), Belial (2 Cor. 6: 15), the *tempter* (Matt. 4: 3), the *enemy* (ch. 13: 39), the *evil one* (ch. 13: 25), the *adversary* (1 Pet. 5: 8), and the deceiver (cf. Rev. 12: 9). The translators of the Septuagint generally rendered *satan* as *diabolos*, “slanderer,” “accuser,” “devil.”

1. Towards the Creator Himself! Why? because God rejected his blood-less substitute, and therefore a counterfeit sacrifice. The act of worship accompanying it was not, could not be “in spirit and in truth” but merely was what Cain convinced himself was the *very best fruit of his own labor*. In vain, he presumed God would accept his assessment and ideas. Man-made worship is of such nature.

2. Towards his very own flesh brother. Why? Because Abel, his younger brother chose to obey God and bring the specified sacrifice of a slain lamb and its blood, with the act of worship accompanying it, therefore he worshipped God “in spirit and in truth,” and pleased God. In so doing, Abel intellectually and spiritually was publicly chose not to excuse, rationalize, justify, condone and thus join his elder brother’s rebellious spirit against God.

“And the Lord said unto Cain, ‘Why art thou wroth? And why is thy countenance fallen?’ *Through an angel messenger* the divine warning was conveyed: ‘If thou dost well, shall thou not be accepted? And if thou doest not well, *sin lieth at the door.*’ Gen. 4: 6, 7.”

What does “sin lieth at the door” mean?

“The choice lay with Cain himself. If he would trust to the *merits* of the promised Savior, and would obey God’s requirements, he would enjoy His favor. But should he *persist in unbelief and transgression*, he would have no ground for complaint because he was rejected by the Lord.” – Ibid, p.74.

“Sin lieth at the door,” that is, the door of the heart and/or mind. Sin is “transgression of the law.” Consummated sin involves a process. **See James 1: 12-16.** And yet it is already called *sin* for God warned Cain, “*sin lieth at the door.*” Embryonic sin begins in the mind and heart before it “breaks out” when acted on and manifested in the act or deed. Therefore, “at the door” means the very last and final opportunity to change one’s mind; “at the last minute” is all that remains.

M.L. Andreasen, in his book, *The Sanctuary Service*, “The Sacrificial System” chapter, pp. 19, 20 says (emphasis mine):

“In the *promises* to Adam and in God’s *treatment* of him, *the gospel is summed up.* God does not leave Adam to himself after he has sinned. He *looks* for him; He *calls* to him. He *provides* a savior for Adam, *symbolized* by the sacrificial lamb. He *promises Adam to help him so to hate* [the ‘enmity’ promise and provision of Gen. 3: 15] *sin that he will by the grace of God abstain from it.* If Adam will *only cooperate* with God, all will be well. Provision has been made for a *return* to the estate from which he has fallen. *He need not be conquered by sin. By God’s help he can overcome it.*

“*This is brought out forcibly in the story of Cain and Abel.* Cain is wroth; his countenance is fallen. He has murder in his heart [not quite the overt act itself], and is ready to kill Abel. God warns him that ‘sin coucheth at the door; . . . but *do thou rule over it.*’ Gen. 4: 7, R.V. This was a *merciful warning* to Cain, and a *statement of hope* that he need not be overcome by sin. As a wild beast ready to pounce upon its victim, sin couches at the door. In the words of the New Testament, Satan ‘goes about as a roaring lion.’ [see 1 Pet. 5: 8-10]. But Cain need not be overcome. ‘Do thou rule over it’ are God’s words. *This is more than a statement; it is a promise.* Man need not be overcome. There is *hope* and *help* in God. Sin is not to have dominion over us. We are to rule over it.” *The Sanctuary Service*, pp. 19, 20.

Q. Yet what did Cain do? (as all who follow his rebellious, choose-my-own-way, attitude and actions, down the stream of time to the stupendous climax of the great controversy and the close of earth's probation, will similarly do? E. G. White wrote:

“Instead of acknowledging his sin, Cain continued to complain of the injustice of God, and to cherish jealousy and hatred of Abel. He angrily reproached his brother, and *attempted to draw him into controversy concerning God's dealings with them*. In meekness, yet fearlessly and firmly, Abel defended the justice and goodness of God. He pointed out Cain's error, and tried to convince him that the wrong was in himself. He pointed to the compassion of God in sparing the life of their parents when He might have punished them with instant death, and urged that God loved them, or He would not have given His Son, innocent and holy, to suffer the penalty which they had incurred [as typified by the sacrifice of an innocent lamb].

“All this caused Cain's anger to burn the hotter. Reason and conscience told him that Abel was in the right; but he was enraged that one who had been wont to heed his counsel [as the elder brother] should now presume to *disagree* with him, and that he could *gain no sympathy* in his rebellion. *In the fury of his passion, he slew his brother*.

“Cain hated and killed his brother, *not for any wrong that Abel had done*, but ‘because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous’ (1 John 3: 12). So in all ages the wicked have hated those who were *better* [spiritually and moral character-wise] than themselves.

“Abel's life of obedience and unswerving faith was to Cain a perpetual reproof. ‘Every one that doeth evil hateth the light. Neither cometh to the light [of truth and righteousness], lest his deeds be reproved.’ John 3: 20. The brighter the heavenly light is reflected from the character of God's faithful servants, the more clearly the **sins** of the ungodly are revealed [by natural, unforced comparison and contrast], and *the more determined will be their efforts to destroy those who disturb their peace*.

“The murder of Abel was *the first example of the enmity* that God had declared would exist between the serpent and the seed of the woman,---between Satan and his subjects and Christ and His followers. Through man's sin, Satan had gained control of the human race, but Christ would *enable* them to cast off his yoke. *Whenever, through faith in the Lamb of God, a soul renounces the service of sin, Satan's wrath is kindled*. [See Rev. 12: 12]. *The holy life of Abel testified against Satan's claim that it is impossible for man to keep God's law*. When Cain, moved by the spirit of the wicked one [Satan, 2 Thess. 2: 8, 3-12], saw that he could not control Abel, he was so enraged that he destroyed his life.

The rage of a vanquished foe. - “*And wherever there are any who will stand in vindication of the righteousness of the law of God, the same spirit will be manifested against them*. It is the spirit that through all ages has *set up the stake and kindled the burning pile* for the disciples of Christ. But the cruelties heaped upon the follower of Jesus are instigated by Satan and his hosts because they *cannot force* him to submit to their control. *It is the rage of a vanquished foe. Every martyr of Jesus has died a conqueror*. Says the prophet, ‘They overcame him [‘that old serpent, called the devil and Satan’] by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives into the death.’ Rev. 12: 11, 9, KJV.” – E. G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, “Cain and Abel Tested”, ch. 5, pp. 74-78.

(To be continued next issue)