

Promoting the Pioneer View of the Pillars of Adventism and the truth that
"Heaven's plan of salvation is broad enough to embrace the whole world." John 3:16

Christ's Perfect Atoning Sacrifice at Calvary and His Character-Perfecting Work as High Priest

Part I

Study for the Month of July, 2007

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Sin: What Made the Work of Atonement Necessary

ATONEMENT, according to Dr. John D. Davis, *A Dictionary of the Bible, 4th Revised edition, 1942*, means "at-one-ment; the making those one in feeling who before were at variance." (emphasis mine) . Some forty years earlier, in 1901, Ellen G. White had already written a more compact yet comprehensive Biblical definition of it. While retaining the basic meaning of "at-one-ment," she connects it, as the Scriptures do, with three important things, namely:

1. Faith in Christ's sacrifice---not faith "on faith," as many mistakenly think so. Faith is in no sense our Savior! Christ's *sacrifice* is that He--the Creator of heaven and earth--volunteered in the councils of the Godhead, to undertake the act of *infinite humility and condescension* by incarnating *permanently* into the perfect flesh-and-blood Man, the Second Adam. In this human nature He was to gain the victory over the same grounds where the first Adam fell. He was to suffer the lot of all men on earth and die the death that all men deserve as his Substitute and Surety. But in His incarnation He did not cease to be the Creator himself, God in the flesh. He, in fact, became the Creator-Redeemer. Of the Godhead in Him alone is humanity and divinity combined.

2. The law of God, as the detector of sin. --Without the law there is no knowledge of sin (Rom. 7:7), and without the knowledge of sin the efficacy of Christ's perfect atoning sacrifice as the *Lamb of God*, and atoning work as the *High Priest*, would be meaningless. To the antinomian, or "the lawless Christian," the amazing work of atonement, particularly Christ's work as *High Priest* in the second apartment of the most holy in the heavenly sanctuary, is a strange thing. But to the law-abiding Christian the work of atonement is his assurance of salvation.

3. His perfect sacrifice enables men to render perfect obedience.--Christ's *perfect atoning sacrifice* made at Calvary is the only atoning sacrifice or propitiation that satisfies the demands of the divine law that was broken by man. It is the very means by which *obedience* to every *principle* of the law is made possible, i.e., to all who comprehend the *spirituality*, not merely "the letter" of the law. It is *legalism* to obey the *letter* of the law--for it is the obedience of sinful, helpless, powerless man. But it is righteousness to obey the *spirit* of the law--for it is only possible when Christ is abiding

in the heart. This is “the obedience of Christ” *in* man, by his co-operation with the divine nature *imparted* to him by the Holy Spirit through his willing invitation.

Notice the following (emphasis mine): --

“All who comprehend the *spirituality* of the law, all who realize its power as a *detector of sin*, are just as helpless a condition as is Satan himself, *unless* they accept the atonement provided for them in the *remedial sacrifice* of Jesus Christ, who is our **at-one-ment** with God. Through faith in Christ, obedience to every principle of the law is made possible.” – Vol. 6 *E. G. White Bible Commentary*, , p. 1077.

Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary, 1942 edition, has these definitions of atonement: “**1.** *Archaic.* Concord; reconciliation. **2.** Satisfactory reparation for an offense or injury. **3.** The redeeming effect of Christ’s incarnation, sufferings, and death; also reconciliation God and men, esp. through Christ. **4.** *Christian Science.* The exemplification of man’s unity with God, whereby man reflects divine Truth, Life, and Love.- *Mary Baker Eddy.* **Syn.** See Propitiation.”

Propitiation (Rom. 3:25; 1 John 2:2; 4:10, KJV) is defined as “the act of appeasing and rendering favorable; conciliation.” It is synonymous with “reconciliation; expiation; satisfaction; atonement.” However, propitiation and reconciliation have primary reference to the *person* offended while expiation and satisfaction, to the *offense* itself. Atonement may have either reference.

It is interesting, to say the least, that this English Dictionary edition utilizes Mary Baker Eddy’s (founder/prophet of Christian Science in 1866) definition of the atonement in juxtaposition to the Biblical explanation of it. The truth would have been better served had the authors and compilers of this authoritative Dictionary included Ellen G. White’s genuinely Holy Spirit-inspired writings on what the atonement comprehends! But those who know the truth “as it is in Jesus” know full well that Satan employs all his cunning and deceptive arts to quell or obscure the truth by palming off its counterfeits as truth in the most prestigious of human references and resources.

Note: Mary Baker Eddy’s religion, called Eddyism in the beginning, eventually became officially known as *Church of Christ, Scientist*. This religion and system of healing disease of mind and body teaches that “*all cause and effect is mental*, and that sin, sickness, and death will be destroyed by a full understanding of the Divine Principle of Jesus’ teaching and healing.”

These assertions of course are not the teaching of Christ nor of the Bible for when one truly traces from cause to effect, going all the way back to the beginning of all things, as recorded in the Book of Genesis, he will find that (a) Satan is the ultimate author and cause of all the sin, suffering, woe, misery, pain, suffering, and death (b) unless one consents and yields to his temptations and falls for his popular deceptions and numberless schemes, Satan is powerless (c) all sin, the “transgression of the law of God,” will be destroyed in the individual’s life, if he accepts and allows Christ’s work of atonement to work for and in him through the Holy Spirit in His Word (d) all sickness, disease, and sufferings are consequences or results of one or both things—the first curse declared by God on the original sin of Adam and Eve (Gen . 3:1-24; Rom. 5: 12-14, 17, 19) or the ignorance or willful choices to go against the moral and physical laws of God (e) “the ages of sin is death,” Rom 6:23. All man became mortal after the original sin of Adam and Eve. Hence, all are born to die the first death. However, “the last enemy to be destroyed is death,” 1 Cor. 15:26, and that will be at the resurrection of the righteous dead at Christ’s second coming. The “second death” to which there is no resurrection, is the eternal reward of all who obstinately refuse to accept the plan of salvation brought by Christ’s two-stage work of atonement in His atoning sacrifice at Calvary and His atoning, mediatorial work as our High Priest in the heavenly sanctuary.

The Hebrew from which “atonement” was translated from is *kaphar* which means. “To cover; to expiate or condone, to placate or cancel; appease, cleanse, disannul, forgive, be merciful, pacify, pardon, purge away, put off; or **make reconciliation.**” This particular word is used only once in the New Testament of the KJV, in Rom. 5: 11, and is the Greek *katallage*, meaning, “exchange, adjustment, i.e., restoration to the divine favor; or **reconciliation.**”- *Strong’s Hebrew Lexicon.*

Variance, according to *Webster's Collegiate Dictionary* is: "1. The fact, quality, or state, of being variable or variant; variation or a degree of such; difference; deviation; discrepancy. 2. Dissension; discord; a dispute; quarrel. 3. *Law*. A disagreement between two parts of the same legal proceeding, which, to be effectual, ought to agree, as the writ and the declaration, or the allegation and the proof."

These interrelated words, particularly the operative words "variance" needing "reconciliation," "forgiveness and cleansing," "restoration to the divine favor,"--- and the ideas, thoughts, principles, processes under the provisions of the Gospel that they convey---are extremely important when considering what the work of atonement comprehends.

The Origin of Sin vs. "Original Sin"

E.G. White wrote (emphasis mine):

"Sin not only shuts away from God, but destroys in the human soul both the desire and capacity for knowing Him. Through sin, the whole organism is deranged, the mind is perverted, the imagination corrupted; the faculties of the soul are degraded. There is an absence of pure religion, of heart holiness. The converting power of God has not wrought in transforming the character. The soul is weak, and for want of moral force to overcome, is polluted and debased." – *Prophets and Kings*, p. 233.

"More clearly than we do, we need to understand the issues at stake in the great conflict in which we are engaged. We need to understand more fully the value of the truths of the Word of God, and the danger of allowing our minds to be diverted from them by the great deceiver.

"The *infinite value of the sacrifice* required for our redemption reveals the fact that *sin is a tremendous evil*. . . . As the sacrifice in our behalf was complete so our restoration from the defilement of sin is to be complete. No act of wickedness will the law of God excuse; no unrighteousness can escape its condemnation. The ethics of the gospel acknowledges no standard but the perfection of the divine character. The life of Christ was a perfect fulfillment of every precept of the law."- *Ministry of Healing*, p. 451.

Since **sin**, the great and only separator between God and man is what necessitated the divine work of atonement, it is necessary to understand the **difference** between "the origin of sin," and "original sin." They are not one and the same.

Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, 1942 edition, has this expanded definition of the word, **origin** (all emphasis in the original):--

"1. The fact or process of coming into being from a source; derivation. 2. a. Parent.; age; ancestry. b. That from which anything primarily proceeds; source; spring; cause. It is **synonymous** with *inception*."

A differentiation between "origin" and "inception" is given as follows:

"The **origin** of anything is its beginning considering especially with its reference to that from which it springs; the **inception** of anything is its beginning regarded especially as *initiating* or inaugurating whatever follows." – *Ibid*.

In the final transfer of *all sins*, at the end of the Biblical work of atonement, these definitions will prove invaluable in helping the Bible student even better appreciate the

wisdom and love of God in dealing with sin and Satan, its Author, originator, and "Inceptor."

E.G. White provides the true Biblical definition of the true origin of sin:---

"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, seized upon as an excuse for rejecting the words of the Holy Writ.

It is impossible to explain the origin of sin, or 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.' [1 John 3:4].

Sin originated with him, who, next to Christ, stood highest in the favor of God, and highest in power and glory among the inhabitants of Heaven. Before his fall, *Lucifer* was the covering cherub, holy and undefiled. The prophet of God declares, "Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou was created, till iniquity was found in thee." [Eze. 28:15]. Peace and joy, in perfect submission to the will of Heaven, existed throughout the angelic host. Love to God was supreme, love for one another impartial. *Such was the condition that existed for ages before the entrance of sin.* —*Spirit of Prophecy, vol. 4, 1884, "Origin of Evil" chapter, pp. 316-7.*

On **original sin**, *Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, 5th edition*, published 1942, says that it is: "*The sin, or defect, incurred by each man in consequence of the first sinful choice made by the first man.*"

Read that once more! This definition is saying that when we sin it is a *consequence* of Adam and Eve's first sinful choice, not because of our sinful choice! They bear the all the blame and guilt; we don't. That effectively renders every man without a will, a mere automaton programmed to commit sin. That is the suggestion of the "sin nature" language which underwrites the "justification *for* sin" or finding an excuse or rationale for it, instead of "justification by faith" which leads to hatred for, and victory over sin!

Moreover, "sin" and "defect" should not be mentioned in the same breathe without any qualifications for they belong to different leagues. The only Biblical definition of sin is that it is "the transgression of the law." 1 John 3:4. Defect is defined as: "Be wanting; want of something necessary for completeness; deficiency." Its secondary meaning also includes "imperfection; blemish; fault." It is synonymous with "lack, want, inadequacy."

While all *moral* imperfection is sin, *physical* imperfections such as blemishes or faults are not. Rather, they are either (a) part of the consequences of the first sin and the curse that passed on to all men, or (b) gross ignorance and negligence of the law of heredity and the physical laws of health (c) the imperfection of knowledge of the laws of God.

To my mind, the more Biblically-sound definition of "original sin" is:

The first sin incurred by Eve, and then Adam,
in consequence of their first sinful choice
to disobey the command of the Creator
by yielding to the temptation of Satan, the originator of sin.

Satan--not Adam or Eve--is the *originator* of sin, while Adam and Eve *committed* the first sin. The former fell by *pride and self-seeking* that led to *rebellion*, the latter

through *yielding to Satan's temptation and deception in disobedience to God's command*. This differentiation must be constantly kept in mind. When understood, this truth will disabuse many confused and misled minds from the soul-destroying blasphemy that "God Himself is the originator of sin and evil" and the gross doctrinal errors that man was created with the propensity to sin, thereby accusing God of sin!

It was to **the sin of man alone** that the everlasting Gospel was devised by omniscience in the councils of heaven before the foundation of the earth, and was immediately implemented the moment man sinned. A Savior was immediately available when man sinned.

On the other hand, Satan (the Devil, Dragon, and Serpent) and the third of angels who fell in their rebellion against God and became the devils on earth **have no similar plan of salvation devised for them**. Everlasting fire, or fire that destroys them completely, is prepared for them. See Rev. 12: 3, 4; Matt 25:41; 2 Pet. 2:4; Jude 6;

The reason for this is that (a) man alone was created in the image of God; angels are not, for they were "created as ministering spirits," Heb. 1: 13,14; (b) the fall of these ministering spirits, under the leadership of the highest of created beings, Lucifer, the first great apostate, took place *in heaven*, while that of man was *on earth* (c) the plan of salvation contemplates not only the redemption of man but also of *planet earth* which likewise suffered the curse of sin; heaven was not cursed and was not defiled by the rebellion. Satan and all the angels who joined him in the rebellion were *cast out of heaven*. Man, even after he sinned, was not cast out of earth but only banished from the Garden of Eden. Notice:

"But even as a sinner, man was in a different position from that of Satan. 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. But man was deceived; his mind was darkened with Satan's sophistry. The height and depth of the love of God he did not know. For him there was hope in a knowledge of God's love. By beholding his character he might be drawn back to God." – Desire of Ages, pp. 761-2.

Thus the true nature of the great controversy and the real protagonists in the conflict of the ages, or as some put it in modern language, "the cosmic battle," is between Christ, the Creator and Satan, the Usurper--the only two masters contending for supremacy over the souls of mankind. The "mystery of godliness" (1 Tim. 3:16) versus "the mystery of iniquity" (2 Thess. 2:7).

The "variance" caused by the original sin of men at once resulted in the *fundamental separation* of man from his Creator. An impassable gulf, or abyss, between those created in the image of the Creator was created by sin. The cumulative devastating *effects* of this "seemingly insignificant transgression," according to faulty, perverted human reasoning, reveals *the exceeding sinfulness of sin by its exceeding terrible consequences and wages—the ultimate of which is death, the portion of all mortals.*

Once more, the whole Bible teaches one thing--**that sin means death**. This was the lesson constantly repeated in all the sacrificial offerings in the Old Testament sanctuary services. The whole Jewish economy declared this truth in trumpet tones. When any one sinned, and wanted to be freed from its guilt and the death penalty automatically

attached to his transgression, he had to offer an innocent sacrifice, one that would take his place and die in his stead! The blood of the dead sacrificial victim was the evidence of a forfeited life of the sinner because of sin!

The unconverted person loves sin, hence, seeks to excuse and justify it. Such hate their fellow sinners while the Creator-Savior “hates sin with perfect hatred” (Heb. 1:9; Ps. 45:7; Ps. 139:22) but loves the undeserving sinner--seeking to save him from his slavery to sin and Satan by the glorious plan of salvation.

A **complete change** had taken place in *the nature* of man originally created in the perfect, flawless image and likeness of God. And what was this change?--from the *sinless* to the *sinful* nature; from the *unfallen* to the *fallen* nature. This was what *human nature* had become, *sinful*--*not sin in itself*.

And these are what man lost because of sin: (1) the original untarnished purity of character created in the image-character of God (2) absolute innocence symbolized by the soft white light that covered his naked body, and, (3) conditional immortality.

Having *tasted* sin--by tasting “the fruit of the knowledge of good *mingled with evil*,” his *tendency* now was towards evil-- to sin, to disobey---although tendency is not sin as the temptation to sin is not sin in itself.

Having *committed* sin he now had the *propensity to sin*. Only those who have sinned, meaning, tasted what sin is like, have the propensity to sin. And since “all have come short of the glory of God,” and “all we like sheep have gone astray” (Rom. 3:23; Isa. 53:6), all mankind, after the Fall, have the propensity or tendency to sin—which, again, is not sin in itself.

The degree and nature of the propensity varies, depending on the specific nature of the sin committed that is cherished and repeated by thought and deed. Coupled with genetically-transmitted factors that work under the natural law of heredity, and the great variable of the environment and associations made by choice, renders the propensity either greater or weaker. For instance, if a child is born in a home whose parents are both alcoholics and drug addicts, and the child grows up in this environment, and chooses the very same way of life when he becomes an adult, he will find the propensities of these specific sins of intemperance and the sinful behavior connected with these much greater to overcome, etc., etc. The cycle must be broken—and can only be done successfully by God’s grace applied to a determined and intelligent effort.

In direct opposition to the theory of evolution, mankind, since the fall at Eden six thousand years ago, has been steadily deteriorating in all aspects of his being—intellectually, physically, and morally until he fills this cup of iniquity to overflowing. Then comes the end of all things sinful, evil, and wicked,—by God’s wonderful plan of redemption.

The Three Natures

God created living creatures according to their respective natures, namely : (1) **angelic nature**, (2) **human nature**, and (3) **animal nature**. The fourth nature which is uncreated, original, unborrowed, eternal, without beginning or end in its absolute perfection and existence, is the **divine nature** exclusive to the Godhead. A knowledge of

these basic truths shields one from being deceived by false doctrines propagated by centuries of repetition through tradition such as (a) **reincarnation** (not to be confused with *incarnation*)—the belief taught by Buddhism that the souls of the dead successively return to earth in new forms or bodies, even of animals; hence, a rebirth of a soul in a new, especially a human body. (b) that “saved” souls ascend to heaven to **become literal angels**, which conflicts with a parallel popular unbiblical doctrine that they are also simply ghost-like “souls” in heaven.

Angels, either the heavenly or the fallen ones, can never become a human beings having been created “as spirits,” although they have been recorded in the Bible as appearing in the *form* of man. And neither can a man become an angel. Likewise, a man cannot become an animal or an animal a man. That human beings are often described as “angel-like” or “animal-like” simply indicates that their practices may resemble man’s concept of angels and animals. A devil or drug-possessed criminal may commit crimes so heinous that he is described as a “beast” or an “animal” and does not deserve to live in human society. On the other hand the life and deeds of certain people may be so filled with kind and merciful acts that they are often addressed as “human angels” or “angel-like.” The very highest form of these comparisons however, is to be appreciated and known as “Christlike” or godlike. But these do not change any of these three basic natures.

Only man was created in the *image* of God, him being the crowning act of creation. All three classes of nature were created perfect, meaning, sinless, and uncorrupted by the curse of sin in the case of the animal nature, and none subject to the effects, consequences, and reward of sin, *until* the transgression of man. Then even the animals and all the lower forms of creation, *to the very earth itself and all that is in it*, began to suffer the *curse* of sin and became subject to death and decay. As Paul describes it, “For we know that *the whole creation* groans and travail in pain together until now.” Rom. 8:22, A.V.

It was *yielding* to temptation in the beginning, before there was any tendency to sin, that was sin. After the fall, it is still yielding to temptation with the *additional* tendency to sin, that becomes sin. James 1: 12-15. This act included exercising the *will*, the governing power in the nature of man, created as a free moral agent, on the side opposed to the will of the Creator. Man had *chosen the other god, the other master* totally opposed to the nature, character, and purposes of his Maker. The separation, in substance, was complete, although evidences and traces of the *original perfection* have survived since then, but in a steadily-deteriorating pattern. Mankind with this evil bent should have long self-destructed had not the Omniscient Creator invested it with **twenty times** as much the vital energy and force (3 T 138-9; Fe 23; MLT 126)—another manifestation and evidence of His wisdom, love, power, and mercy.

However, while the *curse of original sin* “entered into the world,” meaning, it had no existence before sin, it was **death**, “the wages of sin,” **that passed into all men.**” Rom5: 12. Even those who did not and do not commit exactly the same sin of Adam and Eve, mankind’s first parents, all suffer the *consequences and curse* of the original sin although they may not be guilty of the exact sin—unless they repeat the same sins.

The Nature of Sin vs. “Sin Nature”

There is no such thing definitively described as “sin nature” in the Bible. It is either (1) **sin**—the transgression of the law, or (2) the **sinfulness of sin**, or (3) the **absolute sinlessness** of Christ’s incarnated human nature, the only Sinless One.

The “nature of sin” and “sin nature,” are not one and the same in any Biblical sense, as one may be tempted or inclined to believe by the constant and insistent repetition of the theologians and ministers of the antinomian persuasion who also assert that “salvation is a done deal.”

The true nature of sin, as the Bible defines it, has two general aspects:

- (1) the **curse** and evil of sin,
- (2) the **guilt** of sinning.

The former is the effects *of* sin and are manifested in suffering and *mortality*--the “first death.” It is also called “the way of all men,” dust returning to dust.”

“As the result of our first parents’ eating of the forbidden fruit, over all the earth hung the gloom of the divine decree, ‘In the day that thou eatest thereof dying thou shalt die.’ Gen. 2:17, margin. The marks of death and decay were soon seen in the falling leaves and withered flowers. There was no escaping the decree, ‘The wages of sin is death.’ Rom. 6:23. – *Stephen Haskell, “The Cross and Its Shadow,” p. 20.*”

The latter results in *guilt*. When sin is obstinately left unconfessed, unrepented of and unforsaken, it results in the “second death” or eternal death. The former is the “wages,” which is temporary, Christ’s resurrection having changed death into sleep. The latter is the permanent divine penalty to which there is no resurrection unto eternal life. The Bible calls this eternal death, not “eternally-burning hell.”

The popular doctrine that *sin is nature* is the foundation of many gross doctrinal errors such as Universalism, Predestination, that “one can be saved while sinning,” the “once-saved-always saved,” “once-in-grace-always in-grace,” doctrines—that one needs only to be “forgiven” in order to be saved, forget moral character perfection, etc.

But consider Adam and Eve, once more. Both were created *in the image and likeness* of the Creator, thus, with *perfect, sinless human natures*—and yet they sinned and fell! Why? Created as free moral agents, with *the power of the will to choose*, they chose to **disobey** the command of God. Their original sinless and perfect human nature was *yet untested*. Thus the forbidden fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil was placed by God in the middle of the Garden of Eden in order to test man’s untainted character---by testing his *loyalty* in his sinless and perfect nature. In this state he was placed on probation, but failed this *first probationary* test.

“Man was originally endowed with noble powers and a well-balanced mind. He was perfect in his being, and in harmony with God. His thoughts were pure, his aims holy. But *through disobedience*, his powers were perverted, and selfishness took the place of love. His nature became so weakened through transgression that it was impossible for him, on his own strength to resist the power of evil. He was *made captive* by Satan, and would have remained so forever had not God *specialy interposed*. It was the tempter’s purpose to thwart the divine plan in man’s creation, and fill the earth with woe and desolation. And he would point to all this evil as the result of God’s work in creating man.”- *Steps to Christ*, p. 17.

On the other hand, Christ, in the incarnation took the same *fallen* human flesh and blood nature of His brethren (Heb. 2:14, 16-18; 4:15), yet He never once sinned, not even in

thought! Thus Christ is the *only* Sinless One in the human flesh because of three things, namely:

(1) Having been *incarnated* into the fallen human nature.--No human being, not even Adam, came into existence through incarnation but all by *creation* and *natural birth thereafter*.

(2) Christ never knew sin by participating or experiencing it. -- Rather, "He hath *made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin*; that we *might be made* the righteousness of God in Him." Rom. 7: 21. This clearly says that He was not made into the human flesh in order to sin, even as Adam and Eve were not, nor anyone born after them. *Sin is not a necessity*, as all heathen religions believe and teach in various forms; neither is it "a necessary evil." It is simply evil, and no one can understand the cause of sin for if a cause were found for it, it would cease to be sin.

(3) By exercising *His incarnated human will* to constantly choose to submit His will to the Father's will. This is the only way He did not sin in the incarnated sinful nature—the human nature that could be "*tempted in all points as we are*." And temptation is no temptation at all unless there is the capacity to yield to it.

So to attribute sin to nature is preposterous first, and second, a masterful deception, and cannot but be the work of Satan, the master deceiver. It is the foundation of many false doctrines being passed off as Scriptural and "Christian" when in fact, it is counterfeit, antichristian.

Sinfulness and Sinlessness

As David confessed by experience and inspiration, "I was brought forth (shapen, A.V.) in iniquity, and *in sin did my mother conceive me*" (Ps 51: 5). This does not mean that David was already *guilty at birth of his mother's* iniquity or sin, but that *all human babies are born with a sinful human nature*, even perhaps the result of an uncontrolled, unplanned, intemperate activity between husband and wife, or by an adulterous liaison, or by forcible rape.

Again, sinful is not the same as *sinning*, and is particularly *not sin in itself*. Sinful is a simple description of the human nature of man *after* the fall, or an act or thought cherished that is unrighteous; it is synonymous with *fallen*.

Sinfulness is a description of the *fullness* of the evil nature of sin, as in "full of sin" or "filled with sin." This may be clearly seen in the *apparently "minor sin"* of Adam and Eve in "merely tasting" of the forbidden fruit, as compared to the *shocking results immediately after, and its accumulating devastating results six thousand years later!* They were not guilty of "gorging" or "pigging out" on the fruit, as claimed by some, to merit such a seemingly inequitable and harsh punishment. (An elderly church elder once told me during a Bible study series I was conducting years ago that the first sin of Adam and Eve was "sexual" because "they saw their nakedness." What dreadful and pitiful ignorance indeed!). And yet, this unbelief did not prevent the divine verdict from coming to pass,—sin means death. Sinfulness is further described with the act of it, as, *the exceeding sinfulness of sin*, when contrasted and compared with the *exceeding righteousness of the sinlessness* of Christ's nature and character.

Christ was *afflicted* by sin but not *inflicted* with it. He *suffered its curse* and its ultimate penalty but was *not cursed by it*. Only those who have experienced sin are cursed by it. When Christ suffered “the curse of one who hangs on the cross” it was as *the substitute* for guilty man; the guiltless suffering in the stead of the guilty. As Paul says: “Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, *being made a curse for us*: for it is written, ‘Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree.’ Gal. 3: 13. His redemptive act, however, does not erase the will or the power of choice He wrote into the nature of man. We still will have to choose to accept and obey His plan of redemption or else the redemptive price He paid with His own life avails nothing for us.

The contrast is complete between the *exceeding sinfulness of sin* and the *exceeding righteousness of the sinlessness of Christ’s life and character*. The distance between the two is as far as heaven is to earth. But in it is the very foundation of the living hope of the worst of sinners. By His humanity He links Himself with humanity, and by His divinity He links humanity with divinity.

As the **Son of man** He demonstrated, then gave as a gift the perfect example of the obedience that God requires of man. As the **Son of God** He provides the power to man to perfectly obey God’s commandments. This is the true definition, function, and purpose of the duality of Christ’s nature contemplated by the divine mind in the glory-filled Plan of redemption. God in the flesh, lived in the flesh while on earth, the life that all flesh can and must live, if man would inherit eternal life.

Thus, Satan’s untiring effort is to seek to close this gap between sinfulness and sinlessness by attempting to blend the two, mixing specious error with much Biblical truth, amalgamating worldly policy with Biblical principles, introducing a plethora of twilight zones, gray areas, and unending and skillful compromise that has well-nigh darkened the mind of mankind, stifled conviction, and seared conscience.

The opposite of sinfulness is *sinlessness*,--the description of absolute moral perfection of one who is absolutely without sin. But the sinlessness of Christ’s *human nature* and character is not the same as the sinlessness of the *character* of those who will receive the seal of the living God and be translated without tasting death in the last days of earth’s history. Christ’s human nature was absolutely without the corruptions and the propensities of sin, *having never tasted sin by experience*. Whereas, the sinlessness of those who will be sealed, particularly in the last days of earth’s history by learning perfect obedience to His commandments, would be a sinful human nature with all its sinful propensities on account of experiences in sinning but have been repented of and perfectly overcome “by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony.” This is what Apostle Paul calls “the perfect victory *in Christ*.”

God’s servant tells us how this state of sinlessness can be reached by all:--

“Christ was obedient to every requirement of the law. . . . By His perfect obedience He has made it *possible* for every human being to obey God’s commandments. When we *submit* ourselves to Christ, the heart is united with His heart, the will is merged in His will, the mind becomes one with His mind, the thoughts are brought into captivity to Him; *we live His life*. This is what it means to be clothed with the garment of His righteousness. Then as the Lord looks upon us He sees, not the fig-leaf garment, not the nakedness and deformity of sin, but His own robe of righteousness, which is *perfect obedience* to the law of Jehovah.”- *Faith I Live By*, p. 113.

"We need not retain one sinful propensity [Eph. 2:1-6 quoted]. As we *partake* of the divine nature [imparted through the Holy Spirit], hereditary and cultivated tendencies to wrong are cut away from the character, and we are made a living power for good. Ever learning of the divine Teacher, *daily partaking of His nature*, we cooperate with God in overcoming Satan's temptations. God works, and man works, that men may be one with Christ as Christ is one with God. Then we sit together with Christ in heavenly places. The mind rests with peace and assurance in Jesus." – Vol. 7, Bible Commentary, p. 943.

By daily looking to Christ by faith, submitting our wills, obeying the revelations of His Word, learning to be like Him and working together with Him the impossible happens!—

"Everyone who by faith obeys God's commandments, will reach **the condition of sinlessness** in which Adam lived before his transgression." –*Signs of the Times*, July 2, 1902/*Maranatha*, p. 237.

Thus the Biblical descriptions of the human nature that Christ incarnated to—"as the seed of David," "born of a woman under the law," "the Son of man," is to present before the world *the absolute sinlessness of Christ's fallen human nature*. He is indeed "*the Lamb without spot and blameless*." This explains why Christ could, and did take the fallen, sinful human nature, had no propensity to sin, *yet was tempted in all points as every human being is tempted* but not once sinned. This should lay to rest the erroneous, thus sinful assertions that "Christ did not and could not sin because He was both God and man," or that "He had an advantage over man," thus making His ultimate sacrifice a farce, His closing work of atonement a sham—to the delight of Satan.

Sinful Imperfection

Babies, and children not yet of the age of accountability—meaning, those who have not yet acquired informed and intelligent discernment to decide between right and wrong, between good and evil, upon which *willful choice* is made, belong to a special class—this includes those who are born with mental challenges, or those who through disease or injury have lost normal brain functions.

They are not yet guilty of sin or sinning—although they may be committing *sinful acts* such as those driven by unconscious evil tendencies and propensities transmitted to them by their parents, or those acts and actions manifested by the mentally-impaired, etc. And yet all these are sinful imperfections. They belong to the class of "sins of ignorance" committed by those unaware or incapable of recognizing and understanding the high and holy ethics the gospel and the lofty standards set by the principles of God's holy law.

Anything that is not perfectly in accordance with God's standard of perfection, as it was with Adam and Eve *before* the Fall, both physical and moral, is imperfection; and all imperfection is sinful or unrighteous, and "all unrighteousness is sin." (1 John 5:17, first part, A.V). Every child born *after* Adam is both mortal and imperfect, having been born in iniquity, meaning, born in and of a sinful, fallen nature, in a sinful, fallen, imperfect, evil, world. The Bible describes the world as *a world of darkness*.

What Adam and Eve forfeited by sin they could no longer genetically transmit to their posterity; they could not transmit *immortality, the sinless nature, and innocence* to their posterity for they lost all three in the original transgression.

Immortality was guaranteed only as long as they continued partaking of the fruit of the Tree of Life, which God invested with life-sustaining powers. But they were banished

from Eden after the transgression, and cherubims with flaming swords were stationed at the entrance of Eden to prevent the re-entry of Adam and Eve or any of their progeny. No men since then has ever partaken of the fruit of the Tree of life. Hence, there is no such thing as an *immortal sinner!* The Roman Catholic doctrine that “lost souls are *eternally burning in hell*” is one of “the doctrines of devils” for it blatantly contradicts this most basic of truths, and is a malignant attack on the loving nature of God!

Innocence they at once lost that very moment they transgressed having now *known and tasted “evil.”* The partaking of the *forbidden* fruit was the “tasting” of sin and the temporary euphoria they felt, followed by the awful nakedness they saw themselves in, was the first “knowledge” gained *through* sin—the transgression of God’s command.

Conversely, all the post-fall things they acquired by their sin they transmitted to their posterity. They transmitted the fallen, sinful human nature with all its weaknesses, tendencies, and propensities—which are *not sin* in themselves, once more.

No one *was* born in heaven, and no one *will* be born in heaven. Even Christ was born on sinful earth—not in heaven—“born of a woman under the law” (Matt. 1: 21; Gal. 4:4). Jesus plainly taught this when He said to those deceived on this error: “There are no marriages in heaven.” Matt. 22: 30 (see verses 23-30).

All marriages and births take place on earth” This birth is both physical as well as spiritual. Therefore, all spiritual births and rebirths, or true conversion and reconversion, respectively, must take place on earth—while individual probation is still open. This plain truth should expose all the erroneous doctrines, particularly that of Universalism which teaches that those who die unprepared on earth will somehow be “reconverted and saved in heaven.” Countless millions have and continue to “give heed to these seducing spirits” and “doctrines of devils.” 1 Tim. 4:1. **Remember: earth is the fitting up place for heaven.**

Throwing tantrums, and any and every form and species of inconsistency with the principles of God’s law and His perfect and righteous character, including sins of *ignorance*, etc., are *sinful in their imperfection*—meaning, are *not righteous*. The simplest definition of righteousness is “right doing.” Therefore, its opposite is “wrong-doing.” As John said by inspiration, “all unrighteousness is sin.” 1 John 5: 17 (first part). But such sins of sinful imperfections of infants and children not yet of the age of accountability, are not yet imperfections *unto guilt*, therefore, are not yet “unto death,” that is, the “second death.” Rev: 20:6.

For instance, children born to alcoholic, drug-addicted, or sexuality-depraved parents, exhibit at birth early manifestations of these addictions and all the problems, and weaknesses, and depravity connected with such. They are, most unfortunately, born with such *added* genetically-transmitted weaknesses and propensities into a world already racked with sin, depravity, and disease. Thus, these unfortunate children are *much less naturally endowed and equipped*, physically and emotionally, to cope with the numberless temptations and “love of the world and the things of the world” and develop moral character, spiritual values, and physical health compared to those whose parents took judicious care of their bodies and minds even before pregnancy.

This is the unbending law of heredity. Parents transmit to their children both their strengths and weaknesses through their gene pool as well as the internal and external influences that impact upon the children before and after birth “up to the third and fourth generation.” Exo. 20: 5, 6.

“The physical and mental condition of the parents is perpetuated in their offspring. This is a matter that is not duly considered. Whenever the habits of the parents are contrary to physical law, the injury done to themselves will be repeated in future generations.” MS 3, 1897. “The nobler the aims, the higher the mental and spiritual endowments, and the better developed the physical powers of the parents, the better will be the life equipment they give their children. In cultivating that which is best in themselves, parents are exerting an influence to mold society and to uplift future generations.” – *Ministry of Healing*, p. 371.

Lamentable ignorance. – “Those who have charge of God’s property in the souls and bodies of the children formed in His image should erect barriers against sensual indulgence of this age which is ruining the physical and moral health of thousands. If the many crimes of this time were traced to their true cause, it would be seen that they are chargeable to the ignorance of fathers and mothers who are indifferent on this subject. Health and life itself are being sacrificed for this lamentable ignorance.

Sins of neglect. – “Parents, if you fail to give your children the education that God makes it your duty to give to them, both by precept and example, you must answer to your God for the results. These results will not be confined merely to your children. They will reach through generations. Just as the one thistle permitted to grow in the field produces a harvest of its kind, the sins resulting from your neglect will work to ruin all who come within the sphere of their influence.” MS 58, 1899.

This is not to say that such children born to such parents cannot be *transformed* by the grace and power of God—for God’s grace is greater than the greatest weakness and more powerful than the most powerful and most alluring and seductive of temptations or the worst of any sin. In fact, this is the very purpose and power of the eternal gospel—to rescue man from the *darkest* ignorance and from the *deepest* degradation of sin! Jesus came to save the lost *from*, not *in* their lost condition. The Plan of salvation is to completely emancipate fallen man from the slavery to sin.

Only then will children become *guilty* if and when they *knowingly repeat* the sins of their parents and transgress the law, the word of God. This is what the apostle meant when he said, “For all *have* sinned and come short of the glory of God.” The apostle does not say, as some have tried to suggest, that this verse says “all *will* sin,” and *continue* sinning. “Have” is past tense; “will” is future tense. Those who *plan* to sin, are recorded in the Books of deeds in heaven as having already committed that sin even if the act is not consummated for whatever reason.

“The sinner is represented as lost sheep, and a lost sheep never returns to the fold unless he is sought after and brought back to the fold by the shepherd. No man of himself can repent, and make himself worthy of the blessing of justification. The Lord Jesus is constantly seeking to impress the sinner’s mind and attract him to behold Himself, the Lamb of God. . . . We cannot take a step toward spiritual life save [except] as Jesus draws and strengthens the soul, and leads us to experience that repentance which needeth not to be repented of.” – *That I May Know Him*, p. 110.

“Which is greater? Sin or Grace?”

As great as “the mystery of iniquity” is, even greater is the “mystery of godliness.” 2 Thess. 2:7; 1 Tim. 3:16. For, “where sin abounds grace *much more* abounds that *as sin reigns unto death*, even so might *grace reign unto righteousness unto eternal life* by Jesus Christ our Lord.” Rom. 5: 20, 21. Whence cometh sin? From Satan. Whence cometh grace? From God!

Now, who is greater in your life, Satan or God? Sin is the transgression of the law; grace is the power of salvation from sin. And so the other question is: Which has a greater

appeal and conviction to true Christian? To obey God's law, which the Scriptures say is "holy, just, and good" by God's grace abiding in the heart? Or to use God's grace to annul, disregard, or disobey His law? Isn't the latter the very "turning the grace of God into lasciviousness" that the apostle Jude warned of? See Jude 4.

The purpose of the mysteriously wonderful and comprehensive plan of redemption prepared by the Omniscient Mind contemplates and affords not only the forgiveness and the eventual, final blotting out of sins—in the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary, but to give back to man *all the original spiritual gifts and endowments* lost by sin's dwarfing power! Redemption means not only the pardon of sin but the *removal* of it from the person's mind, life, and in the record books of heaven!

This work of reconciliation—on earth-- involves the twin work of justification and sanctification. We are *justified*--completely forgiven and pardoned--by His atoning death and by His atoning blood--*the perfect atoning sacrifice purchased at Calvary--when we receive it by faith through heartfelt repentance and confession*. But we are *sanctified* by accepting His life—His self-denying, sin-conquering life—as our life here on earth! This is the *Christ-life* that every overcoming sinner lives by faith in the perfect righteousness of Christ *by the empowering grace of God*. This is what is meant by "walking with God as Enoch walked."

THE PLAN OF REDEMPTION

"I will redeem you with a stretched out arm, and with great judgment." Exo. 6:6.

There is a world of difference between "salvation being a done deal" and the plan of salvation when completed, being "a done deal." E. G. White wrote, what to me, is one of the most sublime, Scripturally-sound, brief yet comprehensive definition of the plan of redemption, calling it "the science of all sciences." She says (emphasis mine):

"The *central theme* of the Bible, the theme about which every other in the whole book clusters, is the redemption plan, *the restoration in the human soul of the image of God*. From the first intimation of hope in the sentence pronounced in Eden in Eden [Gen. 3:15] to that last glorious promise of the Revelation, "They shall see His face; and His name shall be in their foreheads [Rev. 22:4]," *the burden of every book and every passage of the Bible is the unfolding of this wondrous theme,--man's uplifting--the power of God, "which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" [1 Cor. 15:57].* He who grasps this thought has before him an *infinite* field for study. He has the *key* that will unlock to him the whole treasure-house of God's Word.

The *science of redemption*, is the science of all sciences; the science that is the study of the angels and of all the intelligences of the unfallen worlds; the science that engages the attention of our Lord and Savior; the science that enters into the purpose brooded in the mind of the Infinite,--"kept in silence through times eternal;" the science that will be the study of God's redeemed throughout the endless ages. This is the *highest* study in which it is possible for man to engage. As no other study can, it will quicken the mind and uplift the soul."- *Education*, pp. 125, 126.

"It was He who created in the human soul, with its capacity for *knowing* and for *loving*. And He is not in Himself such as to leave the demands of the soul unsatisfied. We need to clasp a hand that is *warm*, to trust in a heart full of *tenderness*. And even so God has in His Word revealed Himself." - *Ibid*, p. 133. See WGD 325 - 331: Central theme of the Bible; etc.

On the true object of education, and of life itself, she wrote even more profound and enlightening thoughts on the work of the schools of the prophets in the Old Testament times in teaching the plan of salvation:

“The true object of education is to restore the image of God in the soul. In the beginning, God created man in His own likeness. He endowed him with noble qualities. His mind was well balanced, and all the powers of his being were harmonious. But the fall and its effects have perverted these gifts. Sin has marred and well-nigh obliterated the image of God in man. It was to restore this that the plan of salvation was devised, and a life of probation was granted to [fallen] man. To bring him back to the perfection in which he was created, is the great object of life,—the object that underlies every other. It is the work of parents and teachers, in the education of the youth, to co-operate with the divine purpose; and in so doing they are ‘laborers together with God.’”- Patriarchs & Prophets, p. 595.

“The theme of redemption will bear the most concentrated study, and its depths will never be fully explored. Do not fear that you will exhaust the wonderful theme. Go to the fountain for yourself, that you may be filled with refreshment. Drink deep at the well of salvation, that Jesus may be in you a well of water, springing up unto everlasting life.” – Counsels to Teachers, p. 528.

Elsewhere she also wrote word pictures regarding the end of the great controversy, and the future glories awaiting the faithful who have been redeemed (see John 12: 32):

“The great plan of redemption results in fully bringing back the world into God’s favor. All that was lost by sin is restored. Not only man but the earth [which He created] is redeemed, to be the eternal abode of the obedient. For six thousand years, Satan has struggled to maintain possession of the earth. Now God’s original purpose in its creation is accomplished. ‘The saints of the of the Most High shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom forever, even forever and ever.’” – Patriarchs & Prophets, p. 184.

“We may have a vision of the future, the blessedness of heaven. In the Bible are revealed visions of future glory, scenes pictured by the hand of God, and these are dear to His church. By faith we may stand on the threshold of the eternal city, and hear the gracious welcome given to those who in this life co-operate with Christ, regarding it an honor to suffer for His sake. . . . There the redeemed greet those who led them to the Savior, and all unite in praising Him who died that human beings might have the life that measures with the life of God. The conflict is over. Tribulation and strife are at an end. Songs of victory fill all heaven as the ransomed ones take up the joyful strain, ‘Worthy, worthy is the Lamb that was slain, and lives again, a triumphant Conqueror.’” – Acts of the Apostles, pp. 601, 602.

The Biblical Work of At-one-ment

There is one truth that must be constantly remembered when discussing the awesome topic of the atonement: *The grand work of atonement is in order to effect the grand work of reconciliation!*

How great the exceeding sinfulness of sin may be seen in its terrible curse upon mankind and upon the earth for these six thousand years. The work of atonement has to be *even greater* than the work of destruction caused by sin—even as abounding grace is much greater than abounding sin!

Hence, the comprehensive, yet simple, orderly, and impressive sanctuary services with its system of sacrifices, festivals, and the priestly ministry were given by God to teach the way of salvation—the grand work of at-one-ment! The psalmist said, *“Thy way, O God, is in the sanctuary.”* Ps. 77:13. The sanctuary doctrine is the foundation of the faith of true Adventism for it explains the whole plan of salvation from the fall of man to the restoration of Paradise!

The Biblical atonement involves two aspects:

- the *work of reconciliation* and,
- the *means* which enables and sets this comprehensive work of reconciliation in motion, its order irreversible, its efficacy enhanced, its success assured.

DID THE ATONEMENT END ON THE CROSS?

But Christ came as High Priest of the good things to come, with the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is, not of this creation. Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption. For if the blood of bulls and of goats and the ashes of a heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctifies for the purifying of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? Hebrews 9: 11-14, N.K.J.V.

Many theologians, ministers, pastors, and Bible teachers assert that “the atonement ended at the cross.” What most of them don’t realize is that by stating so categorically they deny two awesome aspect so Plan of redemption: (1) the true role and work of Christ as our High Priest (2) the closing work for the salvation of those who profess Christ as their Savior during this antitypical Day of Atonement begun at the end of the 2300-day prophecy of Daniel 8:14 (3) the Investigative judgment that determines who are will inherit eternal life or eternal death.

Coupled with the teachings that “sin is nature,” that we “are born with the sin nature,” and that “the Ten commandments were nailed to the cross,” these have bolstered the popular idea that “salvation is a done deal,” which in turn is expressed in such popular buzz phrases such as: “once-saved-always-saved,” “once-in-grace-always in grace,” “once-forgiven-always forgiven,” “we cannot stop sinning,” “all we need is to be forgiven; sanctification and overcoming are merely “good advise,” not a command of God or a requirement and provision of the gospel,” etc., etc.

The strange thing is that the vocal proponents of these popular beliefs, including the assertion that “the law was nailed to the cross”—are the very same ones lately advocating to have “the Ten Commandments placed in public locations and offices, including court buildings.

We have at least two very serious problems here. (1) Their version of the Ten Commandments obviously and ominously abbreviates the **fourth commandment**—by eliminating that last portion that clearly states that “but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God,” etc. Since their “sabbath” is the papal *Sunday* rest day, it follows that this is the “sabbath commandment” they are pushing for public acceptance, and eventually, legislation, as Revelation 13 prophesied. Hence, it is the law of *men*, not of God. (2) They have not first officially **recanted** their former teachings before turning around on its head. They can’t have both and still be Scripturally-sound. But even stranger is that nobody seems to care—or realizes what is happening! They are asleep. Indeed, as the prophet says, many are like sheep being led to the slaughter!

These popular beliefs and claims are spreading like wildfire in the Evangelical mainstream, and even among those entrusted with the high and holy privilege of proclaiming the sacred

doctrines of “the sanctuary in connection with 2300-day prophecy of Daniel 8:14, the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus”---the very burden of the three angels message of Revelation 14. If these popular beliefs are true they should be able to stand the closest scrutiny of the Scriptures. If not, they must be counterfeits and errors.

This we will undertake with only one thing in mind: to know the whole truth of the matter that Christ may be glorified and His work for the salvation of men may be magnified.

First, we must inquire as to **who** does the work of the atonement, second, **what** is the work of atonement, and third, **when** is the work of atonement accomplished. We will start off by bringing on a concise explanation of these.

In “A Word to the Little Flock,” published by James White, Brunswick, Maine, May 30, 1847, article dated April 21, 1846, p. 12, E.G. White wrote, referring to Daniel 8:14 (emphasis mine):

“I believe the sanctuary to be cleansed at the end of the 2300-days, is the New Jerusalem temple, of which Christ is the minister. The Lord shew [showed] me in vision, more than a year ago, that **Brother Crosier had the true light of the cleansing of the sanctuary**, etc., and that it was His will that Brother Crosier should write out the view which he gave in the Daystar Extra, Feb. 7, 1846. I feel fully authorized by the Lord to recommend that Extra to every saint. I pray that **these lines** may prove a blessing to you, and to all the dear children who may read them.” (signed, Ellen G. White).

Now, what are these “lines” that O.R.L. Crosier wrote which “had the true light of the cleansing of the sanctuary,” more specifically on *the work of atonement*, which would prove to be “a blessing to those who read them,” i.e., with an open heart? Hereunder are those very words reprinted from the “Daystar Extra,” 1846, pp. 40, 41, published by Joshua Himes: (emphasis mine)

Note: I was one of the “blessed “ones when I found these statements around late 1992--although I did not realize their fuller impact and significance till much later when I begun, and still continue to study the sanctuary message and the wonderful truths of God’s love and wisdom that continue to unfold from it!)

“But again, they say that the atonement was made and finished on Calvary when the Lamb of God expired. So men have taught us, and so the churches and the world believe; but it is none the more true or sacred on that account, if unsupported by divine authority. Perhaps few or none who hold that opinion have ever tested the foundation on which it rests:

1. If the atonement was made on Calvary, by whom was it made? The making of the atonement is the work of the priest; but who officiated at Calvary? [It was] the Roman soldiers and the wicked Jews!
2. The slaying of the animal sacrifices was not making the atonement; the sinner slew the victim [see Lev. 4: 1-4, 13-15], after that the *priest* took the blood and made atonement [Lev. 4:5-12, 16-21].
3. Christ was the appointed High Priest to make the atonement, and certainly could not have acted in that capacity till *after* His resurrection, and we have no record of His doing any thing on earth after His resurrection which could be called the atonement.
4. The atonement was made *in the sanctuary*, but Calvary was not such a place!

5. He could not, according to Hebrews 8:4 make the atonement *while* on earth. "If He were on earth, He could not be a priest." The Levitical was the earthly priesthood; the Divine, the heavenly [priesthood].
6. Therefore, He did *not* begin the atonement, whatever the nature of that work may be, *till after* His resurrection, when by His own blood He entered the heavenly sanctuary for us."

The One and Only Perfect Atoning Sacrifice

It is true, however, that Christ's ultimate sacrifice at Calvary, as the antitypical Lamb of God, was made "*only once and for all*" (Rom. 6:10; Heb.9:28). It was this *perfect atoning sacrifice* that was needed in order to obtain the *perfect atoning blood* so that He, in His second office as High Priest, could minister with this atoning blood in the heavenly places of the heavenly sanctuary. This much is plain in the teachings of both the Old and New Testaments. The priest could not and would not minister *without* blood, for "without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sins." Heb. 9:22.

Therefore, the accurate way to describe what took place at Calvary is as follows:

"The perfect atoning sacrifice of Christ ended as completed at the cross."

Not merely--

"The atonement ended on the cross."

Why did it end there? Because it was efficacious and perfect, needing nothing more to be added to it in order to satisfy the divine demands of the broken law. Not one sinner can atone for his own sin, no matter what he does including "giving his body to be burned," for if he could then he would have no need of Jesus the Savior. The that is the substance of Phariseeism, the religion of the heathen, and of the apostate church called spiritual Babylon, "the mother of harlots."

Once more, the work of atonement is not performed by the victim but by the priest! While on earth Jesus was not a Priest, seeing there were earthly priests *after the Levitical order* that still performed in the typical sanctuary or temple services. He was the anointed Messiah that would become the Victim, the Lamb of God, offered at Calvary. His life sacrifice was perfect because He lived a perfect life in the incarnated human flesh from birth to death. Christ ascended at the resurrection in order to present His sacrifice to the Father, which was accepted.

He then returned to earth 40 days after to give final instructions to His disciples, then, ascended once more, this time to be inaugurated as our High Priest *after the order of Melchizedek*—who had no pedigree, meaning, no predecessor or successor. The outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the 120 disciples at Pentecost was the signal that this inauguration into His office as High Priest was completed.

Thus, Christ commenced His work of atonement in two parts, corresponding to the two apartments of the sanctuary, the holy and the most holy. For 1800 years since His ascension, He pleaded His blood for all penitent sinners, as in the type the priest performed the daily sacrifices for ancient Israel. Then at the end of this first period in

1844, at the close of the 2300-day prophecy of Daniel, Christ moved over to the most holy to perform the closing work of the atonement in the antitypical Day of Atonement.

This final work involves the cleansing of the sanctuary of the record of the sins transferred there that have been overcome by the saints while on earth, their sealing—requiring the investigative judgment or pre-advent judgment to determine by the books of record who will deserve eternal life or eternal death,---then the final blotting out of sins at the end of this work, and its final transfer to Satan, typified as the scapegoat in the type.

Now, how does God come near to His true church on earth?

“God is near to us in Christ’s atoning sacrifice, in His intercession as High Priest, in His tender, overruling power over His true church on earth.” *Sons & Daughters*, p. 77.

Notice that Christ’s perfect atoning sacrifice in Calvary is *one among two others* that brings God near to His true church on earth through His Holy Spirit. The other two are the Priestly, merciful intercession of Christ in the heavenly sanctuary, and His tender, overruling power over them, the same power that upholds and overrules the whole universe with love as well, but not as tender as that over His church on fallen earth.

This fallen planet is also represented as that “one lost sheep” whom the shepherd earnestly seeks for by “leaving the ninety and nine.” He hazards every danger and does not cease until he finds it and brings it home. “For God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son that whosoever believeth in Him shall not perish but have everlasting life.” John3:16.

Three, being the number signifying Biblical unity, as with the three Persons of the Godhead, there are also three impressive Biblical symbols that point fallen mankind to the central stupendous truth of the gospel—the **perfect atoning sacrifice** that God in the flesh made at **Calvary**. These three are:

***“The one heifer,
the one ark,
the one brazen serpent,
impressively point to the one great offering
---the sacrifice of Christ.”***

E. G. White, *Faith I Live By*, p. 199.

In the following issues we will discuss each of these three symbols in the light of what the Bible and the Testimonies teach regarding each, as symbols of the **perfect atoning sacrifice** of Christ at Calvary, and the Day of Atonement itself.

May the Holy Spirit guide you and me into all truth, especially the present, sealing truths of these final days of earth’s history.