

VI. God Vindicated.

LESSON XXVIII.

PLAN TO VINDICATE GOD.

1. Since Satan set aside God's law because he regarded it unnecessary and oppressive, and the penalty, because it was unjust and cruel; it follows, from the rebel's standpoint, that God cannot be all wise, and that he must be unjust and tyrannical. See Lesson 24, paragraph 6, (a), (b).

2. In view of this, it was necessary for God to lay a plan to subdue this rebellion, justify and defend his character and government in a manner satisfactory to all concerned.

3. But God could not justify and defend his government by changing or abolishing the law and giving another law in its stead; for that would be an admission that Satan was right in his claim, and that God was not a perfect and all-wise ruler.

4. The following plan would disprove Satan's charges and vindicate the character of God:

(a) The lawmaker or ruler might become a subject.

(b) Then he might obey the law in every particular as a subject, and thus demonstrate that he would not require his subjects to obey a law that he himself would not obey under like circumstances.

(c) Although himself innocent, yet by suffering the penalty of the law as a criminal, he would thereby reveal to all intelligences that he would not punish a criminal more than he was willing to suffer under like circumstances.

(d) And, finally, by promising to pardon the penitent sinner, and reconcile him to the government, on the condition that he would henceforth promise to obey the law.

5. Such a plan would convince and satisfy all intelligent beings that the governor of the universe was not unjust or tyrannical, but that he exercised justice, grace and mercy, not only toward the loyal, but also toward the disloyal or disobedient. Such a king

would deserve to have faithful, loyal subjects, and intelligent beings would most cheerfully love and serve such a God with the fullest assurance that he would always treat his subjects justly and righteously, and also reward faithful service. Ex. 34:6, 7; Ps. 103:8-14; Isa. 49:15. Read Patriarchs and Prophets, chapter IV.

QUESTIONS.

1. What would be the character of God according to Satan's view?
2. What became necessary for God to do, and why?
3. Could God justify himself or his government by changing or abolishing his law? If not, why not?
4. What would be the first necessary step in carrying out such a plan?
5. Explain the next necessary step and why.
6. Tell what the third necessary step would be, and why.
7. How could he show his love, mercy and grace? Paragraph 4 (d).
8. Explain how such a plan, when carried out, would vindicate the character of God and his government.
9. How would moral intelligences feel toward such a God for carrying out such a plan for the vindication of his government and salvation of sinners?

LESSON XXIX.

HOW CHRIST JUSTIFIES THE LAW AND GOVERNMENT OF GOD.

1. Since the Father and Son were united in creating all things, they must also have been united in the government of moral intelligences. Heb. 1:1, 2; John 10:30.
2. Christ, as Creator, had full authority to give the law, which he also did; for he spoke and wrote it. Ex. 20:1-17; Neh. 9:12, 13; 1 Cor. 10:1-4.
3. As a Creator, he was above law—not subject to law as created intelligences—but in order to convince all that the Ruler of the universe would not enforce an unjust or oppressive law upon his subjects, the Father and Son united on the following plan to

prove that Satan's charges against God's law and government were unfounded and unjust:

(a) The Son "took on him the seed of Abraham," "was made flesh," "in the likeness of sinful flesh," was born of "a virgin," "and took upon him the form of a servant." Heb. 2:16; John 1:14; Rom. 8:3; Matt. 1:18-21; Phil. 2:7.

(b) Jesus, by thus divesting himself of his divinity, became weak as a human being and could therefore of himself do nothing; but, strengthened by his Father, through the Spirit, he could, and did, do all. In this way Christ proved that Satan's charge against the law was unfounded. John 5:19, 30; 3:34; 14:10.

(c) Christ, "in likeness of sinful flesh," resisted every temptation to sin, and kept the law to absolute perfection; so he was without sin. Heb. 4:15; Matt. 4:1-10; John 15:10; 1 Peter 2:22.

(d) After that Jesus took the place of the sinner, and though he himself was without sin, yet he was "made" "to be sin for us" —the sins of the world were laid upon him and then he suffered the penalty of the law, which was death, in the sinner's stead. Isa. 53:6; John 1:29, margin; 1 Peter 2:24; 2 Cor. 5:21; Gal. 3:13; 1 Peter 3:18; Rom. 5:6, 8. Thus was Satan's charge, that the penalty of God's law was unjust and cruel, disproved, since Christ willingly suffered it in the sinner's stead.

(e) Finally, Christ rose from the dead, a sinless being, a conqueror of Satan and death. 1 Cor. 15:14-21, 55; Heb. 2:14.

4. Thus, by the Father's and Son's planning together for Christ to become a subject, obey the law as a subject and finally suffer the penalty of the law, were the just principles of God, his law and government fully justified. Isa. 42:21; Col. 1:20; Rom. 3:31.

QUESTIONS.

1. Who were united in creating all things? Give reference.
2. How could Christ have authority to give the law? Two proof-texts asked for.
3. What relation did Christ, as creator and law-giver, sustain to the law?
4. What became necessary to do to disprove Satan's charges against God?
5. What was the first necessary step in this plan? Paragraph 3 (a) and (b).

6. What may be said about Christ's strength or weakness after he became flesh?

7. What about his temptations and obedience to the law? Two texts.

8. Give two texts proving that Christ was sinless.

9. Explain why he was made to be sin. 1 Cor. 5:21.

10. Tell why Christ died, and for whom he died. One text.

11. What effect did the resurrection have upon Satan and his work?

12. Explain how this plan disproved Satan's charges against God, and how it vindicated the government of heaven.

Note.—If this lesson is found to be too long, it may be divided into two lessons.

LESSON XXX.

THE SINNER'S SUBSTITUTE.

1. While Christ, according to previous lessons, vindicated and established the law and government of heaven by becoming a subject through obeying the law and suffering its penalty, yet it was necessary to devise a plan whereby rebellious subjects might be pardoned and reconciled to God.

2. But such a plan could not embrace the abolition of the law and its penalty; for that would be an admission that the sinner or rebel was in the right; therefore, the sinner could not be pardoned on any other condition than that the majesty of the law should be vindicated, and that its penalty remain in force. See Patriarchs and Prophets, chapter IV, last paragraph.

3. A plan to save the sinner through grace and vindicate the law and its penalty, must necessarily embrace the following:

(a) A willing, not unwilling, substitute, who is not subject to the law, and who is worth more than all sinners, would have to take the place of the transgressor, and obey the law for him, and then offer the sinner his righteousness—obedience—for his sins—disobedience. John 3:16; Gal. 1:4.

(b) Then the substitute who had taken the transgressor's sins upon himself would have to die for him—in his stead—in order that the sinner might live. 2 Cor. 5:21; Rom. 5:6, 8; 1 Peter 3:18.

(c) Finally, the sinner could be pardoned only on the condition that he would repent of his sins and cease transgressing God's law. He must let God write the law in his heart and promise by the help of God ever afterward to obey it. Jer. 31: 33, 34; 2 Cor. 3: 3; Ps. 40: 8.

4. Now an angel could not become such a substitute for this fallen world, because angels are created beings, and as such are subject to law, which they must obey for themselves. Furthermore, an angel is of less worth than a fallen world, and could not therefore become man's redeemer. Patriarchs and Prophets, pages 64, 65. Read also Great Controversy, chapter XXIX.

QUESTIONS.

1. What had to be devised to save penitent sinners—rebels?
2. Could such a plan embrace the change or abolition of the law and its penalty? If not, why not?
3. Why is a substitute necessary to the plan of salvation? Paragraph 3 (a).
4. Why must he be a willing substitute?
5. Why could not such a substitute be subject to law like man? Paragraphs 3 (a) and 4.
6. Why must the substitute be worth more than all sinners? Paragraphs 3 (a) and 4.
7. What would the substitute have to obey and for whom?
8. In order to carry out this plan fully, what would the substitute have to offer the sinner? Paragraph 3 (a).
9. What would the sinner give for the substitute's obedience?
Ans.—His sins. Paragraph 3 (b).
10. On what condition only could the sinner be pardoned? Paragraph 3 (c).
11. What must the penitent, pardoned sinner promise to do?
12. Explain why angels could not thus save this fallen world.

LESSON XXXI.

CHRIST, THE ONLY SAVIOUR.

1. None but Christ, who was Creator and Lawgiver, and consequently of more worth than all created intelligences, could save fallen man. Acts 4: 12.

2. Infinite love prompted the Father and the Son to make this great sacrifice to save the fallen world. John 3:16; 1 John 4:9, 10.

3. In carrying out this plan of salvation the following steps became necessary:

(a) Christ was made flesh and became subject to the law like a man. John 1:14; Phil. 2:7, 8. See Lesson XXIX, paragraph 3 (a), (b).

(b) He obeyed the law in the sinner's stead. Ps: 40:8; John 15:10; Rom: 5:19; same lesson, paragraph 3 (c).

(c) He died for sinners. Isa. 53:6; 2 Cor. 5:21; Rom. 5:6, 8; same lesson, paragraph 3 (d).

(d) He promised to reconcile penitent sinners with his Father by pardoning their sins and justifying them before God, but only through grace by faith. Rom. 3:23-28; 5:17-19; Eph. 2:4-9; see lesson XXX, paragraph 3 (c).

4. But this salvation was promised man, only on the condition that he would cease to sin and henceforth obey God's law. John 8:11; Eph. 4:28; 1 John 2:4-5; 5:3.

5. "But the plan of redemption had a yet broader and deeper purpose than the salvation of man. It was not for this alone that Christ came to the earth; it was not merely that the inhabitants of this little world might regard the law of God as it should be regarded; but it was to vindicate the character of God before the universe." Patriarchs and Prophets, page 68.

QUESTIONS.

1. Why could none but Christ become man's redeemer?
2. What prompted the Father and Son to make such a sacrifice to save this world?
3. What was the first necessary step to take in order to save sinners?
4. For whom did Christ obey the law, and why?
5. Explain why it was necessary for him to die in order to save man.
6. On what condition only is salvation offered man?
7. Did the plan of redemption contemplate only the salvation of man?

8. Explain what more was embraced in the plan of redemption.

Note.—It would be well for the students to read carefully the first four chapters in Patriarchs and Prophets and also chapter XXIX in Great Controversy, large edition.

LESSON XXXII.

CONTROVERSY BETWEEN CHRIST AND SATAN.

1. This great and long controversy between good and evil began in heaven between Michael and the dragon. Rev. 12: 7-9.

2. Michael is the archangel or "overangel" (Danish translation). Rev. 12: 7; Jude 9. It is by the voice of the archangel that the dead are raised. 1 Thess. 4: 16. But it is the voice of Christ that raises the dead. John 5: 25. Therefore Michael, or the archangel, must be Christ.

3. The dragon is "the old serpent," "devil" or "Satan." Rev. 12: 7, 9. He is also called the adversary. 1 Peter 5: 8. The controversy in heaven began between Christ and Satan.

4. Satan was from the beginning a perfect and holy covering cherub, but a created being, and as such was subject to the law of his Creator. Eze. 28: 13-15; Isa. 14: 12.

5. As soon as Lucifer began to oppose the government of God in heaven, Christ and the loyal angels advised him to submit to God's government, in the hope of saving him, but he would not yield. Then followed the open rebellion, and his expulsion from heaven. Rev. 12: 7-9; 2 Peter 2: 4; Jude 6.

6. "Such efforts as infinite love and wisdom only could devise, were made to convince him of his error. His disaffection was proved to be without cause, and he was made to see what would be the result of persisting in revolt." "The time had come for a final decision; he must fully yield to the divine sovereignty, or place himself in open rebellion." "God permitted Satan to carry forward his work until the spirit of disaffection ripened into active revolt." Patriarchs and Prophets, pages 39, 41. When Satan had taken that fatal step, then there was no chance for him to return.

7. Thus Satan lost the battle in his conflict with Christ in heaven.

8. Ever since his expulsion from heaven, Satan has been opposing the government of God, and, as a result, only sin—crimes and

misery of every description—have been the fruit of his rebellion, all of which demonstrate that his effort to introduce a better government is a most miserable failure. See Patriarchs and Prophets, pages 42, 43.

QUESTIONS.

1. Between whom did the great controversy in heaven begin?
2. Who was Michael? Three references wanted.
3. Who was the dragon? One text.
4. What was Satan from the beginning? One text.
5. What did Christ and the loyal angels do as soon as Lucifer began to criticise the law of God?
6. Tell what efforts were made to save him.
7. Could Satan then have found pardon if he had truly repented?
8. In what did his opposition end? Paragraph 5.
9. Was there a chance for him to return after he took the final stand for open rebellion against God?
10. What was the outcome of this conflict between Christ and Satan in heaven?
11. What course has Satan pursued ever since on earth?
12. What has been the result, and what does it demonstrate?

LESSON XXXIII.

CHRIST AND SATAN AT THE CROSS.

1. As soon as Christ came to this earth, Satan began to oppose him, hoping to gain an easy victory over him while dwelling in human flesh. Notice the following:

(a) He sought to have Herod destroy him as soon as he was born. Matt. 2: 13-21.

(b) He failed in his efforts to tempt him to sin in the wilderness. Matt. 4: 1-11.

(c) He tried in every conceivable way, through unbelieving Jews and others, to cause Christ to make some mistake, and thus make Christ's mission a failure, but without success. Matt. 22: 15-46.

(d) At last Satan inspired his own servants to betray Christ, condemn and crucify him, although it was proved there was no fault in him. John 13:2; Matt. 27:3, 4; John 18:38; 19:1-6.

2. When Satan inspired his own servants to condemn and crucify Christ, a sinless being, who also was his own—Satan's—Creator, he thereby revealed his true character before the universe; for what could be more cruel and tyrannical than to torture an innocent being to death, and that his own Creator, simply because he seemingly had the power to do so. Whatever sympathy the loyal angels or sinless beings may have had for Satan, this act of causing Christ to be crucified did forever uproot it out of their hearts, and thus Satan fell as lightning from heaven. John 12:32; Luke 10:18.

3. On the other hand, Christ died on the cross to save a fallen world. Love promoted the Father and Son to make this great sacrifice. It may be a question who suffered the most, Christ on the cross, or the Father who in anguish sympathized with his Son suffering such a cruel death to save sinners. John 3:16.

4. At the cross the two characters meet: Satan, the rebel, the cruel murderer, but ruler of this world; Christ, the Creator, who, prompted by infinite love, suffered the penalty of the law to save a fallen world. As intelligences of other worlds, as well as man, consider the scenes of the cross, they pass judgment upon the prince of this world, and all are thus forever reconciled to God and his government. John 12:31-33. Col. 1:20. Read also Patriarchs and Prophets, pages 68, 70; Desire of Ages, chapters 78, 79.

5. Upon the cross it was actually demonstrated that the Governor of the universe is Love, and that he is merciful, just and gracious, and not an arbitrary tyrant; and thus the cross proves Satan's charges against God to be false, and therefore Satan stands unmasked before the universe as a deceiver and a cruel tyrant.

6. All will have to come to the cross of Christ and decide for themselves whom they wish to have for their king, and whom they wish to serve. Joshua 24:15; Rev. 22:17.

7. When Christ cried, "It is finished," the victory was won, and when he rose from the dead, Satan knew that his cause was finally lost. Heb. 2:14; Acts 2:24.

8. Satan, however, continues his opposition to Christ and his people, and this opposition becomes more intense as we near the end of time. Rev. 12:12, 17.

QUESTIONS.

1. How did Satan begin to oppose Christ after he was born? Paragraph 1 (a).

2. How did he try to overcome him by temptations? Paragraph 1 (b), (c).

3. What was Satan's last effort to get a victory over Christ?

4. How was the character of Satan revealed in causing Christ to be crucified?

5. How is the character of Christ revealed in his voluntary death on the cross?

6. Who probably suffered the most, the Father or the Son?

7. Explain the difference between the character of Christ and of Satan, as revealed at the crucifixion, and the result. John 12:31-33.

8. To what must all come and look before deciding whom they will have for their ruler, and whom they will serve?

9. What finally sealed the destiny of Satan? *Ans.*—The death and resurrection of Christ.

10. Why does Satan continue his opposition to the government of God? Rev. 12:12, 17.

LESSON XXXIV.

REVIEW QUESTIONS ON LESSONS XXVIII TO XXXIII.

1. What became necessary for God to do in order to subdue Satan's rebellion? Lesson XXVIII, paragraphs 1, 2.

2. What was one thing God could not do? Paragraph 3; Lesson XXX, paragraph 2.

3. What plan could be devised and carried out that would disprove Satan's false charges? Lesson XXVIII, paragraphs 4, 5.

4. State Christ's relation to law governing created intelligences. Lesson XXIX, paragraphs 1-3.

5. What was the first step in the plan of salvation? Lesson

XXIX, paragraph 3 (a); lesson XXX, paragraph 3 (a); lesson XXXI, paragraph 3 (a).

6. Explain the second step. Lesson XXIX, paragraph 3 (b), (c).

7. Explain also the third step. Same lesson, paragraph 3 (c).

8. What was the last step to complete the plan of salvation? Lesson XXX, paragraph 3 (a), (c); lesson XXXI, paragraph 3 (d).

9. Why could not an angel have carried out this plan of salvation? Lesson XXX, paragraph 4.

10. What prompted Christ to become the Saviour of the fallen world?

11. On what condition can man be saved? Lesson XXX, paragraph 3 (c); lesson XXXI, paragraph 4.

12. Did this plan of redemption embrace anything but the salvation of sinners? Lesson XXXI, paragraph 5.

13. Where and how do we see Satan's true character revealed? Lesson XXXIII, paragraphs 2, 4.

14. Where do we find Christ's character most perfectly revealed? Same lesson, paragraphs 3, 4.

15. Where must all created intelligences come to decide who alone is worthy of love, service and adoration. Same lesson, paragraph 5; John 12: 31-33.

16. Had efforts been made to save Satan before his expulsion from heaven? Lesson XXXII, paragraphs 4-6.

17. What was the final act in this plan that reconciled all in the universe to God? Lesson XXXIII, paragraph 4.

18. Explain how the cross disproves Satan's charges against God, and how it reveals his own character. Lesson XXXIII, paragraph 5.

19. Can you now explain why God allowed Satan to continue his rebellion and how the plan of salvation will completely destroy the serpent's head, uproot and destroy all the seeds sown by Satan in his rebellion against God? Gen. 3: 15.

Note.—This and the preceding lessons should be mastered thoroughly before the class proceeds further. It may be necessary to review some lessons, but it will pay.

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