

## **SHEEP AND GOATS.**

Our answer to some inquiries awakened by the article under this caption in the August number, we publish, hoping that they may be of use to others who may not have written.

This parable cannot with any consistency be applied to anything which occurred at the first advent of our Lord. Its location is fixed by the introductory sentence – "When the Son of Man shall come in His GLORY."

Its location is further fixed by the rule of judgment or trial prescribed, viz., works. The positions assigned on the right hand or left, are expressly stated to be because (or inasmuch as) certain works were done or not done. The test of the trial or judgment of the church during the Gospel age is "not works, but faith." By grace are ye saved through FAITH. "Not of works lest any man should boast." "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." Mark 16:16.

The reason for this may be readily seen: To test men by works in the Gospel age while under the dominion of the Prince of this world, and greatly crippled by the imperfections of our fallen nature, would be a very unfair standard. Hence, though now works according to our ability must naturally follow faith, our justification and reward are according to our faith, and not according to our works.

In the coming age the circumstances will be very different. With Satan bound, evil and error restrained, the clear light of truth shining, driving away all obscurity, mist, darkness and error, and consequently driving away all room and opportunity for doubt, faith will become the possession of all mankind: all will know the Lord from the least to the greatest. Therefore we may see the

reasonableness of the Scripture teaching that the test in the next age will not be faith, which none could then avoid, but works, which under those favorable circumstances should result from the knowledge and opportunities then afforded.

We know of no statement of Scripture relative to the world's trial during the Millennial age, which mentions any other test of approval than that of works. Of course, this will imply and include a previous faith in the ransom. Works will be the test of judgment in that age as faith is the test in this.

Works was the basis of the Law covenant, which with its mediator – Moses, was a shadow or type of the good things coming – the New Covenant and its mediator – Christ. And thus Moses wrote of Christ, saying: "A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren like unto me. Him shall ye hear in all things: and it shall come to pass that every soul [person] that will not hear [heed] that prophet shall be destroyed from among the people. (Acts 3:22,23.) This shows obedience (works) to be the basis of the antitypical covenant – the "New."

The Apocalypse teaches the same lesson regarding the world's trial in the Millennial age, when the present thrones [R701 : page 5] are cast down and the rulership of earth is handed over to the saints, (Rev. 20:4;) when Satan is restrained (ver. 2); when the glorious New Jerusalem (heavenly kingdom) has come to rule the earth in harmony with the laws of heaven; and when the nations are being guided and directed by the light of truth shed abroad from it, (Rev. 21:23,24.) When the books (of Scripture) are opened, and their teachings made clear and plain to all, and another book or record of those worthy of life-everlasting is open for recording the names of those who then shall be the Lord's "sheep," and worthy, as shown in the parable, to enjoy his favor and everlasting life;\* when the GREAT WHITE THRONE, representative of purity,

justice, fairness and impartiality of the TRIAL, when all the world – small and great shall be tried by Him that sitteth upon the throne, the basis of that judgment or trial is expressly stated in these words, "And they were judged every man according to their works." Rev. 20:13

\*Evidently the "other sheep" as also another "book of life" from that of the Gospel age. (John 10:16 and Rev. 20:12.)

In perfect harmony then, is the teaching of Jesus in the parable under consideration. Love and its fruit, good works, will be the ground upon which the sheep of that age will be rewarded; and failure to develop and exercise these, under such favorable circumstances, is the peculiarity of the wayward "goat" class, condemned as unworthy of life – to be cut off – to die. God deems them unworthy of life, and our hearts and minds bow to his all-wise decision, "Every soul which will not hear that prophet shall be destroyed from among the people." Acts 3:23.

Let it not be forgotten that the Millennial trial according to works, and ability of those being tried to render works of merit and approval, is based upon their redemption from the Adamic curse, by Jesus, who gave himself a ransom for all. Had it not been for that redemption there never would be a Millennial age of blessing and trial for the dead race. There could have been neither awakening or trial had we not been bought with His precious blood.

Does not the reading of Matt. 25:41, indicate torture in literal fire as the merit of the "goat" class? No, not a word is mentioned about torture. The thought of torture has been added to the statement by some whose theories it fitted, without any authority, except that they infer torture as a result of contact with fire. But

fire is not used as a symbol of torture, but of destruction. God under the Law shadows never permitted Israel to torture any creature, though he frequently commanded things and dead carcasses to be burned with fire as a symbol of utter DESTRUCTION. It is this significance that we attach to fire in this verse – destruction. To apply it literally would be out of harmony with the entire parable – the fire is not more literal fire than are the goats literal goats. Everlasting fire then would signify everlasting or non-ending destruction.

### **"PREPARED FOR THE DEVIL AND HIS ANGELS."**

Is it true that this fire or DESTRUCTION which will take place at the close of the Millennial age and in which the "goat" class will share – was prepared or designed, for the Devil and his angels? Yes, thus it is written, and so we believe. It is stated in so many words. 1 John 3:8; Heb. 2:14.

"His angels" – the word here translated angels signifies messengers, and the Diaglott so translates it. We do not understand it to refer to those fallen angels now associated with Satan – "Those angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation," etc., (Jude 6) but we apply the word on a more general principle. Satan will be bound at the close of the Gospel age, and all under his control will be released. But those who during the trial of the Millennial age will not become willing and obedient servants of the Lord, are reckoned His adversaries – the messengers and accomplices [angels] of the great adversary, Satan; and into destruction such are cast – the devil and his angels. It was prepared for them. Such, and such only, did God from all eternity design to blot from existence as unworthy the boon of life.

Does the word everlasting in verse 46 indicate that the punishment will last forever? It certainly does. When some one told you that the Greek word aionian, here rendered everlasting,

had not such a meaning, but always meant a limited period of time, they misinformed you, and merely applied a definition common to a sect called "Adventists," but nevertheless an error. It is true that the words aion and aionian sometimes are used to refer to a limited period of time – an age, epoch, or lifetime, but it is equally a fact that these words are used sometimes to represent an unlimited or "everlasting" time, and that it is so used in this verse there is no room for question or controversy. It is settled by the use of the same word to the righteous – they go into life EVERLASTING or "aionian" – the same Greek word being used. This fact is obscured in the common version by reason of the translators having used a different English word – eternal. The passage declares the same length of punishment (destruction, as shown above) to the goat class, as of reward to the righteous sheep, and if Adventists and Universalists claim that aionian here always means a limited period, they should, to be consistent, hope only for a life of limited duration for the righteous, since the same Greek word is used in reference to both.

Is it true that the word "cursed" in verse 41 in the original Greek means merely unblessed or less blessed?

By no means; the Greek word here translated cursed is *kataraoimai*. It signifies the very opposite of blessing; it signifies a curse in the sense usually understood in the English. Webster defines cursed thus: Deserving a curse; execrable; hateful; detestable; abominable. Apply any of these synonyms in the place of cursed in the language of the text and see what kind of a blessing it would be. The same Greek word is used with reference to the cursed fig tree in Mark 11:21. Also in Luke 6:28, Rom. 12:14 and James 3:9. And the same root word, *katara*, is used three times with reference to the original curse or condemnation resting upon all who failed to keep perfectly the requirements of the law of God in

Gal. 3:10-13. If the curse lifted by Jesus' death was severe, then the curse imposed by him upon those called "goats" in the parable, is severe, and in no sense a blessing. As a matter of fact, the first curse which came upon all men through Adam's disobedience was death – cutting off from life – and to purchase for man a right to live again, Jesus needed to be and was "made a curse for us" – cut off from life, treated as the sinner, as our substitute, that we might be restored to life and made the righteousness of God through him. (2 Cor. 5:21.) If, then, the Adamic death was a curse from which none could be released without a Redeemer, what must it imply to receive the curse again, and from the lips of the Redeemer? It implies, what other Scriptures state, that those who shall refuse to hear and heed that Prophet shall be cut off. The fact that he who redeemed and will bless by bringing all to a knowledge of the truth, with full opportunity for life everlasting, will be the one to say "Depart ye cursed" declares plainly that their trial will then be ended. He redeemed from the curse once, but "Christ dieth no more." (Rom. 6:9.)

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