

OTHER SHEEP NOT OF THIS FOLD

"Other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold and one Shepherd." – John 10:16.

DURING the Gospel Age the Lord has but one Church, one flock who follow him. "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me." (John 10:27.) From the very first there has been no change in the Lord's flock, either in the terms of discipleship or in the reward promised; as we read, "Ye are called in one hope of your calling." – Eph. 4:4.

The "other sheep" evidently refer to others who will become the Lord's followers under different conditions and under a different call from that which has gone forth during the Gospel Age. The present flock are called upon to sacrifice the earthly nature and become partakers, with the Master and Shepherd, of the divine nature. (Rom. 12:1,2; 2 Tim. 2:11,12; 2 Pet. 1:3,4.) The Lord's flock of the future will not be invited to sacrifice and to a change of nature, but will, on the contrary, be privileged to maintain and retain the human nature; and by obedience will gradually, step by step, experience Restitution to perfection of mind and body and morals, lost through sin in Eden and redeemed by the great Sacrifice at Calvary. These are not now of the "flock," for they are not invited to the divine nature and a heavenly mansion, but will be invited to earthly nature and Paradise restored during the reign of Messiah.

"WHEN HE WHO IS OUR LIFE APPEARS WE SHALL APPEAR WITH HIM"

These other sheep are particularly mentioned by our Master in Matt. 25:31-46. This parable of "the sheep and the goats" belongs, not to this Age – the Gospel Age – but to the coming Age – during the Messianic reign. The introduction of the parable (vs. 31) shows this,

saying, "When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy messengers with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory, and before him shall be gathered all nations; and he shall separate them one from another as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats."

The Savior has not yet appeared in his glory, and the promise is that "*When Christ*, who is our life, *shall appear*, then shall *ye* [the Church, the *sheep* of the present Age] also appear with him in glory." (Col. 3:4.) In a word, the overcoming "sheep" of the Gospel Age will be associated with the Great Shepherd in his work of dealing with the world of mankind during his reign. [R4785 : page 87] Then all mankind will be on judgment or trial, to be tested with a view to proving who will develop the sheep-like disposition, and who will develop the goat-like disposition.

THE DIVIDING OF THE SHEEP WILL BE IN PROGRESS DURING THE MESSIANIC REIGN

During that thousand years all who develop the spirit of obedience will be accepted as members of the [R4785 : page 88] Shepherd's flock, on the right hand of favor, as worthy of eternal life; and at the close of that Dispensation will hear his words, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." – Vs. 34.

Those of the contrary spirit who, under the favorable conditions of that glorious time, will fail to develop the characteristics of the Lord's sheep – gentleness, meekness, love – will be accounted unworthy of eternal life, unworthy of being considered among the Lord's sheep. By that time these will have taken their places on his left hand of disfavor. Then will they be rejected. The *sheep* class will abide in the Lord's favor and be granted an abundant entrance into everlasting life; while the *goat* class will be rejected as unworthy of eternal life and will be sent away to experience his disfavor of everlasting punishment.

That punishment, however, will not be everlasting torture, but everlasting *death* – a death which will last through all eternity; for the Lord will not again become a sacrifice, nor will he offer further opportunity to those rejecting the Divine arrangement during that glorious reign. As in the parable a *goat* is used to symbolize those who are contrary to the Lord, so *fire* is used as a symbol of the destruction which will come upon the goat class. Fire is the most destructive agency known and is fitly used to symbolize destruction. Verse 46 of this parable might very properly be read, "These shall go away into everlasting *cutting off* (Greek, *kolasin*), [from life], but the righteous into life eternal,"

