

::R0725 : page 5::

SATAN'S OUTLOOK

Some are inquiring: If there is hope for "those angels who kept not their first estate" may there not be hope for Satan that he may yet be reclaimed? If not, why not?

We reply that it is for any who so think to produce the passage of Scripture which holds out one ray of hope for Satan. It is not incumbent on us to prove that he will not be saved, for this may reasonably be assumed if no hope is held out for him in Scripture. Nevertheless we believe our position so strong, that we will take the offensive and say that it can be demonstrated from Scripture that Satan will not be permitted to exist beyond the Millennial age.

Does some one suggest that as we once thought there was no hope for "those angels," yet were mistaken, so we may be mistaken about Satan? We reply that it was the very positive declarations of Scripture about the utter destruction of Satan, that we applied ignorantly once to "those angels," not rightly dividing the word of truth." Those Scriptures still stand unchallenged, against Satan. We must not throw away Scripture because once too widely applied. So too we once too widely applied Rev. 20:8, and supposed that Satan's host, of finally impenitent ones at the close of the Millennium would be a great multitude "as the sand of the sea," but a closer examination and better division of the word of truth convinces us—not that Satan will have no followers or "goats," (Matt. 25:33) nor that this Scripture is at fault, but that the words "the number of whom is as the sand of the sea" refers not to those whom Satan will lead into sin and destruction, but to the whole population of the earth at that time, all of whom, Satan shall *attempt to mislead*. He shall be successful only with the goat class, which will *thus* be manifested and separated for the destruction mentioned in the succeeding verse.

Regarding Satan: From the curse on the Serpent his agent and representative in nature, down to the vivid pen-pictures of the apocalypse, every statement regarding his destiny, either pointedly or plainly as in Heb. 2:14, and Rom. 16:20, or symbolically, as in Rev. 20:10,15; and Matt. 25:41,46, all tell the one story, viz.: The proud, haughty prince of evil, whose rebellion and evil intent God has used and overruled to his service, is, in the end of the Millennial age, when good can no longer be served through his permitted existence, to be totally and forever destroyed.

Nor can a judgment illuminated and guided by Scripture do otherwise than approve this sentence.

The fact of Satan's opposition to good seems to some an evidence that he was either created a devil, or has undergone a moral change which should be corrected. But an examination will, we

think, show the incorrectness of both suggestions.

First, God in the very nature of things could not create a devil, for the same reason that a good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit. Therefore Satan in his first estate must have left the Creator's hand *perfect*. We should remember that God's method in the creation of intelligent creatures, is to give full freedom of choice to do good or evil, that such may, like himself, do right because it is right. Thus the first and representative man had full freedom of choice to do good or evil. His rejection of what God told him was good and choice of the reverse, has proved to many of us the wisdom of God's judgment concerning good and evil. When restored to perfect manhood at the close of the Millennium, the restored race will again have the choice of good or evil before them and finally. (Rev. 20:7-15.)

Secondly, Satan so far as we are informed has undergone no dying or deteriorating process, hence is as perfect as when created, and could not be restored to a perfection not lost. A *perfect*, intelligent being by the same perfection, can either love or hate, and can use his powers in harmony with either good or evil. Thus Christ, before he became a man, had the same liberty and ability that Satan possesses, to either do good or evil. This liberty is indicated by the Apostle in Phil. 2:6. Who, being in the form of God, [spiritual] did not meditate a usurpation [of Jehovah's power and authority] to be equal with God, but [on the contrary, and in direct opposition to such a self-exaltation, he] humbled himself [in obedience to the divine will], etc.—*Diaglott*.

Nothing is clearer from this, than that he *could have* chosen the opposite course of self-exaltation, which Satan chose. The Apostle's language here suggests

::R0725 : page 6::

the contrast between the courses of these two perfect spiritual beings. One sought to exalt self, saying: "I will be AS the Most High;" the other, willingly took a *lower*, a human plane of being, to accomplish obediently the will of the Most High. Pride was Satan's choice and course; humility was the course and choice of him who was the beginning of the creation of God. Both will find the fruit God foretold. "God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble." (James 4:6.) Him (Jesus) hath God highly exalted. By a right use of his perfect powers, in harmony with Jehovah's will, Jesus has gained the very

::R0726 : page 6::

thing—the high exaltation to be as [like] the Most High, which Satan coveted and endeavored to grasp, while he, God says, shall get the reward of his course—Pride leadeth to *destruction*.

Does some one suggest that Satan ought to have *another* trial? What advantage could he have that he does not possess? We ask, If none, what could be the object or benefit of such other trial? Man will be benefitted by being *restored* to a perfection lost, but so far as we can judge from Scripture, Satan has not lost any of his powers, hence could not have them restored and could not be thus advantaged. Man has learned valuable lessons of the sinfulness and injuriousness of sin and disobedience, and all the human race labors, groans, waits and hopes for the better day promised. Their experience with sin, counterbalanced by an experience in righteousness, will evidently convince the large majority that "righteousness exalteth a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people." (Prov. 14:34.) And when the Lord's standard is set up in that Millennial Day many shall go and say: "He will teach us of his ways and we will walk in his paths." But of Satan what shall we say? He has seen the evil which he brought upon man. He has witnessed the sin, depravity, suffering, wretchedness, and death working havoc for four thousand years, yet pitied and repented not, but the reverse. When, then, the Redeemer appeared, to give himself a ransom for all, he beset him and endeavored to dissuade him and tempt him and cause him to fall.

Not only the head but the members of the body he has beset and opposed. He so completely controlled and used the Roman Empire that symbolically it is sometimes called by his name—the devil and Satan; and thus and through its successor, Papacy, he wielded a terrible persecuting power against the saints of the most high God. He is the same still, opposing through all whom he can use in his service, (1 Pet. 5:8,) "the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world." (John 1:29.)

This is what we know of his course, past and present. It is one unbroken course of evil, in opposition to the blaze of light and knowledge. And what we might have surmised of his future, judging by his past course, the sure word of prophecy clearly foretells, viz.: that when restrained from evil-doing for the thousand years of Christ's glorious reign, and made to witness the grand benefits conferred upon men through their Lord and Redeemer, all this not only fails to lead Satan to repentance, but upon the first opportunity, immediately that the restraint is removed, he engages afresh in his former work of exalting himself and opposing God and his laws. Then shall the full penalty of God's law be let fall upon him who richly deserves it—destruction. (Rev. 20:15.)

It should not be forgotten that the Apocalypse is a symbolic *prophecy*. It tells of things not as they *may* happen to come to pass, but accurately—as they shall surely come to pass. Hence it is not its teaching that Satan *might* not change during the Millennial reign, but it absolutely shows that he will not repent or change. This prophecy of our risen Lord (Rev. 1:1) is no less sure of fulfillment than the statements of any other prophet. Hence we conclude, there is no doubt or question possible on this subject, except it be to question the divine record.

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— February, 1885 —



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