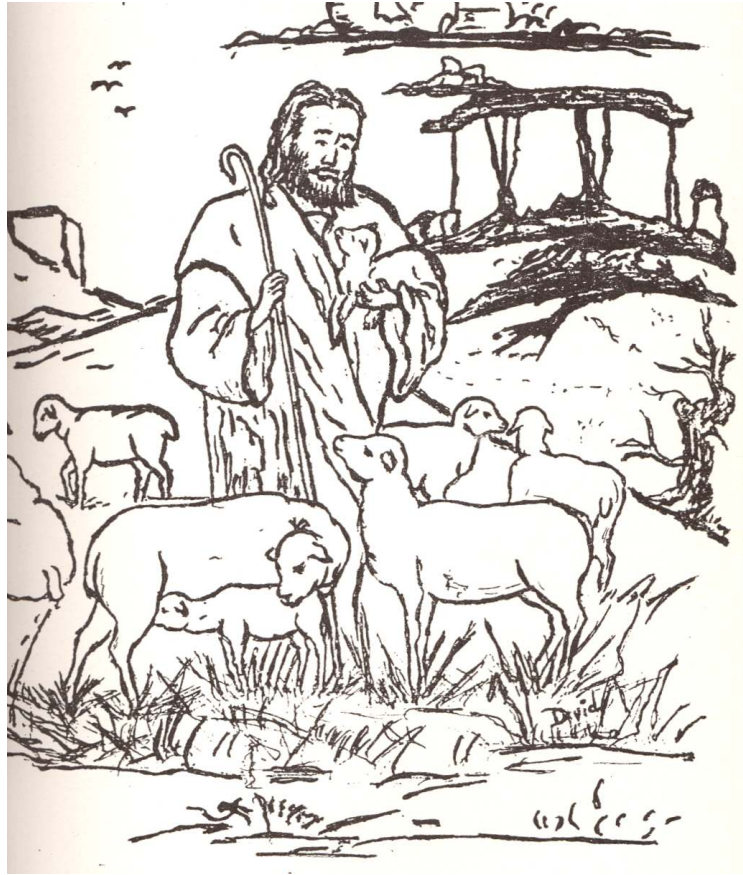


The Loving Shepherd



The Lost Sheep

By Wm. D. Gale

Preface

The Shepherd of shepherds and the Psalm of Psalms are portrayed so vividly. Before looking at this favorite Psalm, let's take a look at the Psalms as a whole. H. T. Sells in Bible Study by Books declares, "This is not one book, but five and they contain the work of a number of authors. The hymns and spiritual songs were written during a period of about 1,000 years. There are 150 Psalms; 100 bear the names of persons, 16 have headings without names and 34 have no headings. To David are ascribed 73, to Asaph 12, to the sons of Korah 12, to Herman 1, to Ethan 1, to Moses 1, and to Solomon 2."

The Psalter is a marvelous record of human hearts pouring themselves out from age to age in communion with God. It touches all of human experience, the depths of human trouble and the heights of joy. There is a word of tenderness towards God which has never been surpassed.

The Psalms were written to be sung. They are called both Israel's hymn book and Israel's prayer book. Of 75 quotations from the Psalms found in the New Testament, more than 50 represent Christ as the speaker or are directly applied to Him, while He Himself affirms He is the theme of their testimony. (Luke 24:44; John 5:39).

The entire collection of Psalms can be divided into five books. These divisions are rich history and have been compared to the five books of the Pentateuch. The end of each division is marked by a doxology.

I. First Division – Ch. 1-41. Closing with a doxology and double amen.

II. Second Division – Ch. 42-72. Closing with a doxology and double amen.

III. Third Division – Ch. 73-89. Closing with a doxology and double amen.

IV. Fourth Division – Ch. 90-106. Closing with doxology, amen, and hallelujah.

V. Fifth Division – Ch. 107-150. Closing with rapid succession of hallelujahs.

It appears nearly every angel of joy and sorrow have swept, as they passed, over David's harp. The collection of these 150 Psalms have, each with a distinct message, found their way into the Canon of Sacred Scriptures. Without question, the best known is Psalm 23. It has been labeled the Pearl of the Psalms; it has been called the Psalm of Psalms and it has carried the name the Nightingale of the Psalms. No bird sings so sweetly and especially in the dark night as the Nightingale.

This Psalm also has been referred to as the Gem of the Psalms and captioned a master piece of lyric. Spurgeon says it is a matchless Psalm. Another writer claims it a surpassing ode, which none of the daughters of music can excel.

The sweet singer from the Judean Hills has found entrance in my heart as he harps his melody of The Shepherd Psalm. In this Psalm of Psalms, David, the greatest of all the kings of Israel, reminisces his shepherd boy days and the leadership of his Lord. The inspiration he gives has captured my spirit; like David, I exclaim, "The Lord is my Shepherd!"

As I have spoken from the Shepherd's Psalm and from other Biblical truths about the Good Shepherd in camp meetings, conventions and churches throughout the United States, I have been requested to share the outlines used. My collection has grown. The easiest way seems to be by book form.

It is my sincere prayer my friends who read this will capture a portion of the blessing I have received.
– The Author

Table of Contents

I.	The Shepherd's Psalm and the Good Shepherd. "The Lord is my Shepherd."	1
II.	The Shepherd's Plentitude and the Generous Storehouse. "I shall not want."	8
III.	The Shepherd's Preparation and the Gorgeous Meadow. "Green Pastures" and "Still Waters."	13
IV.	The Shepherd Pilot and the Gracious Escort. "Leadeth. .paths of righteousness."	19
V.	The Shepherd's Protection and the Gentle Presence. "Valley... shadow of death, "thou art with me."	23
VI.	The Shepherd's Provision and the Great Banquet. "A table before me."	32
VII.	The Shepherd's Paradise and the Glorious Sheepfold. "House of the Lord forever."	36
VIII.	The Shepherd's Passion and the Gruesome Search. "Go after that which is lost."	43
Conclusion		
	The Shepherd's Promise and Glorified Saints	55

Foreword

23rd Psalm Devotional

The test of an author's devotion to God's truth and Christ is his ability to take familiar scripture, clothe it with freshness and give it life. William Gale does this for us in his devotional treatment of the 23rd Psalm. The book of Psalms has been a favorite water spring for holy and devout people for centuries. Philosophers, statesmen, soldiers and scientists continue to pay homage to God's wisdom and grace vouchsafed to them by reading and meditating upon them.

In this volume the light of saints and scholars are focused upon the many facets of this gem of gems. With the light of the past, William Gale adds his own keen insights making this one of the most valuable tools available to the teacher or devout Christian. The result is a brilliant, radiant treatment of a tried and tested classic. Its inspirational and devotional content is exceptional because it flows from one whose life has been lived in the high pasture near the Great Shepherd.

If you would know more about the Great Shepherd and His sheep; if you would help yourself find "still water and green pastures", get this book, The Loving Shepherd – The Lost Sheep. The Preacher will find scores of sermon starters accompanied by tender, touching dramatic illustrations. The Child of God will find beautiful poetry and devotional insights that will bless and comfort his heart. Since William Gale has decided to open his treasure house of literative gems, a great host of God's people will be blessed through the writings of his unique ministry. Rev. H. E. Schmul, Executive Secretary. Inter-church Holiness Convention

Dedication

My dear wife, Alice, has many times both wept and rejoiced with me as I have spoken on the Shepherd and the Shepherd's Psalm. Our four children are now grown and in their own homes. While in their childhood they felt the pangs of loneliness with their father being away from home so much, but they have been most understanding.

Appreciation

Our son-in-law, Rev. Donald Churchill, felt the call of God to be a preacher of the gospel. We are very pleased the Lord has set him apart for this sacred ministry. He and his wife, Alice, have given themselves to their calling. We deeply appreciate the time they have given in preparation of the manuscript of our first book I Sat Where They Sat and this book The Loving Shepherd - The Lost Sheep. Our son, Dr. David Gale and his wife, Elizabeth, have given us much help in preparing this manuscript.

Credit Line

We have found F. B. Meyer's book The Shepherd's Psalm, a source of real helpful inspiration. I make several long quotations from his book. The outlines are of our own making, and suggestions have come from many sources. The poems included are our own unless otherwise indicated. Certain of the outlines and poems have come from along the way of travel as we meditated upon this Shepherd's Psalm in traveling throughout the night to keep our schedule. Rev. David Delgarito, Navajo pastor for the Society of Indian Missions at Hospah, New Mexico, has furnished most of the art work for the chapter divisions. The picture for chapter two and the picture of the Navajo Lassie with the lost lamb were drawn by Miss Lenore Walters, a Navajo student at the Northwest Indian Bible School at Alberton, Montana. Mrs. Tom Beckham of Kansas City, Kansas drew the Chief used on the cover of our Indian book, I Sat Where They Sat. The same picture is used in The Loving Shepherd - The Lost Sheep with the Indian version of the Twenty Third Psalm printed in the picture. (Pictures not available in this online book

Twenty Third Psalm - Indian Version

“THE GREAT FATHER above a Shepherd Chief is. I am His, and with Him I want not. He throws to me a rope, and the name of the rope is love. He draws and draws me where the grass is green and the water is dangerous not. I eat and lie down and am satisfied. Sometimes my heart is very weak and falls down, but He lifts me up again and draws me into a good road. His name is WONDERFUL.

“SOMETIME, it may be very soon, it may be many, many moons, He will draw me into a valley. It is dark there but I'll be afraid not, for it is in between those mountains that the Shepherd Chief will meet me, and the hunger I have in my heart all through this life will be satisfied.

“SOMETIMES He makes the love rope into a whip, but afterward He gives me a staff to lean upon: He spreads a table before me with all kinds of foods. He puts His hand upon my head and the "tired" is gone. My cup He fills till it runs over. What I tell is true. I lie not. These roads that are "away ahead" will stay with me through this life, and afterward I will go to live in the Big Tepee and sit down with the SHEPHERD CHIEF forever”. – by George Hunt of the Kiowa Tribe

The Shepherd

The Lord Has A Sheepfold
The Lord Has His Sheep
And he that keepeth Israel
Doth neither slumber or sleep

The Loving Shepherd tells us
Of ninety-nine in fold
One sheep was missing
Out in desert cold.

He left the little flock
To look for that stray
He searched through the desert
And mountains far away.

When happily He found it
On that mountain track
He lifted it to His shoulder
And brought it safely back.

Jesus tells of the sinner
Who God's love has spurned
Caused Heaven great rejoicing
When to the fold returned.

Ninety and nine in the fold
One missing, could it be”
An Indian who has strayed
And the shepherd could be me?

The Shepherd and the Sheep

In the Old Testament God the Father is often pictured as the Shepherd. In the New Testament the people are the flock. In the following texts, God is shepherd, and the people His flock. "The Lord is my Shepherd: I shall not want," Psalm 23:1. "Thou leadest the people like a flock by the hand of Moses and Aaron," Psalm 77:20. "We thy people and sheep of thy pasture will give thee thanks for ever," Psalm 79:13. "Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel, Thou that leadest Joseph like a flock," Psalm 80:1. "He is our God, and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand," Psalm 95:7. "We are his people, and the sheep of his pasture," Psalm 100:3. God's Anointed One, the Messiah, was also pictured as the Shepherd of the sheep. "He shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in His bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young," Isaiah 40:11.

The leaders of the people are described as the shepherds of God's people and nation. "Woe be unto the pastors that destroy and scatter the sheep of my pasture!" Jeremiah 23:1-4. Ezekiel has a tremendous indictment of the false leaders who seek their own good rather than the good of the flock. "Woe be unto the shepherds of Israel that do feed the flock themselves! Should not the shepherds feed. Ezekiel 34.

In prophetic picture, Isaiah 52:13 through Isaiah 53:12, portrays the blessed Messiah taking His place as the Lamb, yes as "a sheep before her shearers." He became first a sheep! Then our Shepherd! From the Manger with sheep and cattle to the cross of Calvary. The good Shepherd "laying down his life for sheep."

This picture passes over into the New Testament, Jesus is the Good Shepherd. He is the shepherd who will risk His life to seek and to save the one straying sheep, Matthew 18:12; Luke 15:4. He has pity upon the people because they are as sheep without a shepherd, Matthew 9:36; Mark 6:34. His disciples are His little flock, Luke 12:32. When he, the shepherd, is smitten the sheep are scattered, Mark 14:27; Matthew 26:31. He is the Shepherd of the souls of men (1 Peter 2:25) and the great Shepherd of the sheep (Hebrews 13:20).

In Revelation Jesus is again pictured as a Lamb. In Revelation 6:16 & 17, the great tribulation is manifest and men are pleading for the mountains and rocks to fall on them to hide them from the wrath of the Lamb. A lamb is not thought to be fierce. The Divine Lamb in final judgement will be. In Revelation 7:14 the tribulation saints are pictured as those who "have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." Describing His Tribulation Saints in Revelation 12:11 as those who overcome "by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony." A glorious and triumphant picture is recorded in Revelation 17:14. "These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for He is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with Him are called, and chosen, and faithful."

Chapter I

The Shepherd's Psalm and the Good Shepherd "The Lord is my Shepherd."

Comparing Psalms 22, 23 and 24 will cause us to appreciate more deeply our loving Shepherd.

In Psalm 22 He is the Savior of the Cross, the Shepherd of yesterday. In Psalm 23 He is the Shepherd of the Crook, the Shepherd of today. In Psalm 24 He is the Sovereign of the Crown, the Shepherd of tomorrow.

In Psalm 22 He is the Good Shepherd. "I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep" (John 10:11). In Psalm 23 He is the Great Shepherd. "Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus that great shepherd of the sheep. . ." (Heb. 13:20). In Psalm 24 He is the Chief Shepherd. "And when the chief shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away" (I Peter 5:14).

We see Him in His threefold ministry. In Psalm 22 He is Prophet and as Prophet He dies for His sheep. A few of the many expressions take us right to the cross. "My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me;" "all my bones are out of joint;" "they pierced my hands and my feet;" "they look and stare upon me;" "they part my garments among them and cast lots upon my vesture." In Psalm 23 He is Priest and as Priest he lives for His sheep. We shall see this as we look at this precious Psalm. In Psalm 24 He is King and as King returns for His sheep. "The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof; the world and they that dwell therein." He will soon return for his own. "Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lifted up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in." In the three Psalms respectively He appears as Lamb, Leader and Lord.

B. B. Sutcliff states, "It is as the great Shepherd He here appears. The depth of which can never be plumbed or its heights ever fully scaled. . . It is written in the first person for Christians everywhere. It is written in the first person, so Christians may read it as though there were no other sheep in the great shepherd's flock." The Lord is our great Shepherd. Let's consider it in that light.

I. My Possession. The Lord is my Shepherd."

II. My Platitude. "I shall not want."

III. My Peace. "He maketh me to lie down in green pastures."

IV. My Pleasure. "He leadeth me beside the still waters."

V. My Preparation. "He restoreth my soul."

VI. My Pilot. "He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake."

VII. My Protection. "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me."

VIII. My Provision. "Thy rod and thy staff; they comfort me."

The Shepherd's rod was used for correction as well as protection. The shepherd leaned upon his staff to watch over his flock. Let me encourage you, our great Shepherd is watching over His flock.

IX. My Privilege. "Thou preparest a table before me."

X. My Portion. "Thou anointest my head with oil, my cup runneth over."

XI. My Promise. "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life."

XII. My Prospect. "I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever."

He is my Savior, my Shepherd, my Lord. As I reminisced my relationship to Him, I penned these words, Seeking my Lord. He is my hope now and all eternity.

Seeking My Lord

Hurrying to Bethlehem's manger
I came to seek my Lord
"Been here, but gone to Calv'ry,"
Was the startling word.

Rushing on to Golgotha
To the rugged cross
Where blood poured forth in anguish
But gone; What a loss!

Whither have they laid Him?
In yon sacred room.
Looking now in wonder,
I see the empty tomb.

Pressing on to find Him
Upon Mount Olivet's brow.
"Ascended into heaven,"
They proclaimed with humble bow.

Gazing up to Heaven,
What a glorious deed!
Purchased man's redemption
Now on high to intercede

How can I climb to heaven?
My sins are like a flood
Clearly now I see it,
Through Jesus' crimson blood.

Sobbing, bent with sorrow,
Laden down with sin,
I cried for Christ's forgiveness
And He came to dwell within.

I glance back at the manger
And at Calvary's jagged thorn
Then to the humble altar
Where my soul anew was born.

A life now lived in Jesus,
Never lifeless, lonely, bare,
For He comes like rays of sunshine
When I go to Him in prayer.

Look from earth to heaven,
For according to His Word,
In eastern clouds returning,
Our Savior, King, and Lord.

Forever to adore Him,
In glory, face to face
Christ, my blessed Savior,
Who redeemed me by His grace.

Scripture: Psalm 23:1-6

Text: Psalm 23:1 "The Lord is my Shepherd"

Subject: The Great Shepherd

Introduction

A. This beautiful Psalm is a miniature Gospel in itself. These six verses picturing the Shepherd and the sheep are some of the most loved verses in the entire Bible.

B. Verses:

- (1) 1-3 picture a happy life.
- (2) 4-5 picture a happy death.
- (3) 6 pictures a happy eternity.

C. This Psalm is loved because:

(1) It is simple. It has one hundred eighteen words in it. Ninety-three of these words are monosyllable.

(2) It is special. Every one who reads it feels it is their own personal Psalm. There are seventeen personal pronouns in it. That is enough to go around.

"My," "I", "me," and "mine."

"My Shepherd"
"I shall not want"
"Me to lie down"
"Me beside the still water"
"Restoreth my soul"
"He leadeth me"
"Yea though I walk"

"I will fear no evil"
"Thou are with me"
"Rod and staff comfort me"
"A table before me"
"Presence of mine enemies"
"My head with oil"
"My cup runneth over"
"Goodness and mercy shall follow me"
"All the days of my life"
"I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever."

(3) It is spiritual. David both knew what it was to be a shepherd and to be shepherded. Rev. Paul Eger tells of a waterhole in the Middle East where thirty-five flocks of sheep were watering at one time. One shepherd called and a portion of the sheep followed. Another called and another part followed him. It was like this until the last shepherd of the thirty-five called and all that were left followed him. Each sheep knew the voice of his own shepherd. Sick sheep will sometimes follow the wrong shepherd. Reverend Eger added that many professed Christians know the voice of the television comedians better than they know the voice of Jesus.

Scared sheep will not lie down. Here we have a spiritual demonstration. A Great Shepherd, a Green Pasture and a Gratiified Sheep.

I. A Great Provider. "The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want."

II. A Green Pasture. "He maketh me to lie down in green pastures."

III. A Gratifying Place. "He leadeth me beside the still waters."

IV. A Gracious Pardon. "He restoreth my soul."

V. A Good Path. "He leadeath me in the paths of righteousness for his name sake."

VI. A Genuine Presence. "Yea though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for thou art with me."

VII. A Generous Portion. "Thou Preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies."

VIII. A Glowing Performance. "Thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over."

IX. A Gentle Provision. "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life."

X. A Glorious Prospect. "I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever."

"The Lord is my Shepherd." These are simple words, yet some of the most exhilarating and triumphant words ever uttered. Though a simple truth, they are most profound. The little lass who created the inspiration for the following poem, truly gave the key to happiness.

Led By a Child

Each child had cited a Bible verse
In the Sunday school, one day,
And each one with credit performed his part
Till at last came little May.

"The Lord is my Shepherd" – she paused to think
And her heart the faster beat"
The Lord is my shepherd, that's all I want."
And she proudly took her seat.

'Twas a message new from a little child,
And it stirred my inmost soul;
Such a tender Shepherd is all I want
Till I reach the heavenly goal.

"The Lord is my shepherd, that's all I want."
He feedeth His flock with care;
He carries the lambs in His bosom close,
And nothing can harm them there

"The Lord is my Shepherd, that's all I want,
He numbers His flock each day;
He knows all the lambs of His fold by name
And watches them lest they stray.

"The Lord's my shepherd, that's all I want."
And why should I covet more?
The pastures are green where He leadeth me,
And abundant is his store.
– Author Unknown

Alexander Maclaren in his sermon, "The Shepherd King of Israel," writes, "The King who had been the shepherd-boy, and had been taken from quiet sheep-cotes to rule over Israel, sings this little psalm of Him who is the true Shepherd and King of men. We do not know at what period of David's life it was written, but it sounds as if it were the work of his later years. There is a fulness of experience about it, and a tone of subdued, quiet confidence which speaks of a heart mellowed by years, and of a faith, made sober by many a trial.

"If, then, we think of the psalm as the work of David's later years, is it not very beautiful to see the old king looking back with such vivid and loving remembrance to his childhood's occupation, and bringing up again to memory in his palace the green valleys, the gentle streams, the dark glens where he had let his flocks in the old days."

DeWitt Talmage in his sermon: "The Good Shepherd," believed likewise – that David was reflecting back on his boyhood. "When he became an old man, thinking of the goodness of God, he seemed to hear the bleating of his father's sheep across many years, and to think of the time when he tended them on the Bethlehem hills, and he cries out: 'The Lord is my Shepherd.'" He further

states, "David, the shepherd boy, was watching his father's sheep. They were pasturing on the very hills where afterward the Savior was born of which you have heard much. 'The lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world.'" David, the shepherd boy, was beautiful, brave, musical and poetic. I think he often forgot the sheep in his reveries. There in the solitude he struck the harpstring that is thrilling through all ages. David the boy was gathering for David the poet and David the man."

It is a joy to come to know the Lord as your Savior. It is a continued thrill to know Him as your Shepherd. Some of the sweetest words ever penned are, "The Lord is my Shepherd."

To divide the Psalm in simple outline:

I. The Shepherd's Pasture - Vs. 1-3

II. The Shepherd's Protection - Vs. 4

III. The Shepherd's Provision - Vs. 5, 6

To my knowledge, I have never made Edith Richardson's acquaintance. Somewhere I came across her writing on this twenty-third Psalm, I like the way she reflects upon it.

"The Lord is my Shepherd" – what more could I want? He knows my limitations, how easily I tire; so He makes me rest among the good things where the waters are not rough, and He gives new strength to my soul.

"In all the bustle and confusion on the highways and freeways, He leads me in the paths of peace and quiet – His way.'

"If I should be called to go into the valley of shadows, I would not be afraid because He says, 'I will be with you always.'

"If I need a cane or a walker, He brings His rod and staff to help me, and makes me conscious of His being there.

"He knows how hard it is for me to do things for myself sometimes, so he has my meals prepared for me.

"When all this stress and strain makes my head ache, He places His healing hand with the 'balm of Gilead' on it to relieve me.

"Here is the last and best: He has prepared a place for me so I can dwell in His house forever."

F. B. Meyer finds David's signature all over this Psalm. Notice what he has to say. "The twenty-third Psalm tells of the Great Shepherd, who keeps His flock with unerring sagacity and untiring devotion. No hireling is He. He asks no wage; He takes no reward. He counts not the cost. The sheep are His own and in these sweet words we learn what He is towards them today in all His shepherd tenderness and love.

"Some have spoken of this Psalm as a creed. I have it on good authority that one thinker at least, wearied with the perplexing questions that agitate so many hearts and brains in this strange,

questioning age, and pressed to give some positive affirmation of his creed began reciting these words with solemn pathos of voice, and kindling rapture of eyes. And when he had finished the whole Psalm, he added, "That is my creed. I desire no other! I learned it from my mother's lips. I've repeated it every morning when I awoke for the last twenty years. Yet I don't half understand it; I am only beginning now to spell out its infinite meaning, and death will come on me with the task unfinished. But; by the grace of Jesus, I will hold on by this Psalm as my creed, and will strive to believe it and to live it; for I know that it will lead me to the Cross, it will guide me to glory.

"Others have spoken of it as a minstrel. Before me lies a page that describes it in some such terms as these: that it is "a pilgrim-minstrel commissioned of God to travel up and down through the world, singing so sweet a strain, that none who hear it can remember whatsoever sorrow has been rending and tearing at the heart!" This too is true. This Psalm speaks in language the universal heart of man can comprehend.

"It has remanded to their dungeon more felon thoughts, more black doubts, more thieving sorrows, than there are sands on the seashore, comforted the noble host of the poor, sung courage to the army of the disappointed and poured balm and consolation into the heart of the sick. It has visited the prisoner and broken his chains and, like Peter's angel, led him forth in imagination, and sung him back to his home again. It has made the dying Christian slave freer than his master; and consoled those whom, dying, he left behind mourning, not so much that he was gone as because they were left. It will go singing on through all the generations of time, and it will not fold its wings till the last pilgrim is safe, then it shall fly back to the bosom of God whence it issued, and sound on, mingled with all those harmonies of celestial joy which makes heaven musical forever.

"But it may also be compared to the Holy of Holies of old – the inner shrine of that splendid Temple, which rose, noiseless as some tall palm at the bidding of Solomon. However eager or noisy might be the tide of human life that throbbed and surged through the narrow streets of the Holy City, or even pulsed in the Temple courts, yet there was always one quiet and undisturbed enclosure, where angel-guardians stretched out their wings in calm repose over the ark of God. There at least was rest; and if the priestly occupants had only been allowed to tarry in that secret place of the Most High, surely they had forgotten the fret and rush of life, under the spell of that unutterable repose. Haste and restless anxiety must doff their garments and shoes ere they could enter there.

"And all this is the Psalm before us. It is an Oasis in the desert; it is a bower on a hill of arduous climbing; it is a grotto in a scorching noon; it is a sequestered arbor for calm and heavenly meditation; it is one of the most holy places in the temple of Scripture. Come hither, weary ones, restless one, heavy laden ones; sit down in this cool and calm resort, whilst the music of its rhythm charms away the thoughts that break your peace. How safe and blest are you, to whom the Lord is Shepherd! Put down this volume, and repeat again, in holy reverie, the well-known words to the end; and see if they do not build themselves into a refuge on which the storms may break in vain.

"There is no question as to who wrote it – David's autograph is on every verse. But when and where did it first utter itself upon the ear of man? Was it sung first amid the hills of Bethel, as the sheep were grazing over the woods? Or was it poured first upon the ear of the moody king, whose furrowed brow made so great a contrast to the fresh and lovely face of the shepherd-lad, 'who was withall of a beautiful countenance, and goodly to look to?' It may have been. But there is a strength, a maturity, a depth, not wholly compatible with tender youth, and seem rather to betoken the touch of the man who has learnt good by knowing evil; and who, amid the many varied experiences of human life, has fully tested the shepherd-graces of the Lord of whom he sings.

Chapter II

The Shepherd's Plentitude and the Generous Storehouse "I shall not Want."

The Lord is my Shepherd; I shall not want."

I shall not want freshening. "He maketh me to lie down in green pastures."

I shall not want fluid. "He leadeth me beside the still waters."

I shall not want forgiveness. "He restoreth my soul."

I shall not want for a forerunner. "He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake."

I shall not want friendship. "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me."

I shall not want fortitude. "Thy rod and thy staff they comfort me."

I shall not want food. "Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies."

I shall not want for favor. "Thou anointest my head with oil."

I shall not want a fulness. "My cup runneth over."

I shall not want followers. "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life."

I shall not want for a fold. "And I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever."

"The Nightingale of the Psalms." Reverend Jarrette Aycock uses this title for this beautiful Psalm. The Nightingale is the sweetest singer of the birds, and surely this psalm is the sweetest of all Psalms. As we pass down life's path, we may feel as many, it is a veil of tears. Let me comfort you – every need of our life is supplied through our great Shepherd. We need food, water, sleep, shelter, and many other needs of a personal nature.. All our needs are met in Christ, the good Shepherd.

I. I shall not want for consideration. "The Lord is my Shepherd." "But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus: (Philippians 4:19).

II. I shall not want for contentment. "He maketh me to lie down in green pastures." "Come unto me, all ye are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light" (Matthew 11:28-30).

III. I shall not want for confidence. "He leadeth me beside the still waters." "Ho, everyone that thirsteth, come ye to the waters and he that hath no money; come ye, buy and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price" (Isaiah 55: 1).

IV. I shall not want for conversion. "He restoreth me soul," "Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation" (Psalm 51:12).

V. I shall not want for composure. "He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake." "In all thy ways acknowledge Him and he shall direct thy paths" (Proverbs 3:6).

VI. I shall not want for companionship. "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for thou art with me." "Fear thou not; for I am with thee; be not dismayed; for I am thy God; I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness" (Isaiah 41:10).

VII. I shall not want for consolation. "Thy rod and they staff they comfort me." "As one whom his mother comforteth so will I comfort you" (Isaiah 66:13).

VIII. I shall not want for condolence. "Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies." "Hearken diligently, and eat ye that which is good, and let thy soul delight itself in fatness" (Isaiah 55:2b).

IX. I shall not want for consecration. "Thou anointest my head with oil." "Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard; that went down to the skirts of his garments" (Psalm 133:1,2).

X. I shall not want for cheerfulness. "My cup runneth over." "But whosoever drinketh the water that I shall give him shall never thirst: but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life" (John 4:14).

XI. I shall not want for care. "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life." "I will sing of the mercies of the Lord forever" (Psalm 89:1). (See the Nightingale of the Psalms.)

XII. I shall not want for comfort. "I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever." "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also" (John 14:1-3).

Our Needs Supplied by the Good Shepherd

I. Need a Savior. "The Lord is my Shepherd."

II. Need Sleep. "He maketh me to lie down in green pastures."

III. Need to be Satisfied. "He leadeth me beside the still waters."

IV. Need Salvation. He restoreth my soul."

V. Need Supervision. "He leadeth in the Paths of Righteousness."

VI. Need Security. "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil for thou art with me."

VII. Need Stability. "Thy rod and thy staff they comfort me."

VIII. Need Sustenance. "Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies."

IX. Need Spirituality. "Thou anointest my head with oil, my cup runneth over."

X. Need Shelter. "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever."

The Shepherd Of My Needs

The Lord is my Shepherd
My Savior indeed.
I shall not want
He supplieth my need.

He makes me lie down
In pastures so green
Where the waters are still
And my soul is serene.

Tho I should walk
In the valley of death
I'll fear not the shadow
For thou art my breath.

Thy rod and thy staff
Art a comfort to me
Where evil endangers
On the mountain or lee.

Thou preparest a table
From heaven's rich store
My head thou anointest
'Til my cup runneth o'er.

Goodness and mercy
Will leave me, no never
I'll dwell in God's house
Forever and ever.

From the pen of F. B. Meyer we again quote: "Jehovah means *The Living One, the self-existent Being, the I Am. He who was, and is to come: who inhabiteth Eternity, who bath life in Himself.* . He alone is self sustained. This mighty Being is our Shepherd. Lift up your heart to Him in lowly adoration and say, 'Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel: Thou that leadest Joseph like a flock, Thou that dwellest between the Cherubim, shine forth.'

"But as we travel in thought down the ages, we meet a gentle, weary Man, on whom the shadow of coming sorrow hangs darkly. He speaks within a few miles of the spot where these words had been first uttered, some 1200 years before."

"The Lord Jehovah is my Shepherd." For this reason, "I shall not want."

F. B. Meyer continues to tell us: "He takes up these very words, and applying them to Himself, He says, 'I am the Good Shepherd.'

"Combine these two: the august word for the everlasting God, and the tender word for the Savior; and we have a worthy title for our Lord, Jehovah-Jesus. Let us read it into our Psalm, and say with a new appreciation of its meaning, 'Jehovah – Jesus is my Shepherd.' What need can we have which may not be met by this two-fold nature? As Jehovah, He has all power; as Jesus, all sympathy. As Jehovah, He is Sovereign Lord of all; as Jesus, He still treads the pathways of this world by our side, whispering sweetly and softly in ears, 'Fear not, little flock!'"

"Shepherd,' That precious work for God was uttered first by Jacob – himself once a shepherd – as he lay adying in his chamber; and with the long thoughts of old age went back to the imagery of his early life, speaking of God as having 'Shepherded him all his life long.' All through the Bible the golden thread runs, until in its closing pages, we read of the Lamb – who leads His flock to the rivers of waters of life.

"The Eastern shepherd occupied quite a unique position toward his flock; and friendship sprang up between him and the dumb creatures of his care, to which there is no counterpart among ourselves. Let us think ourselves into that relationship. In the early morning he would lead his flock from their fold to the pasture lands. All day he must closely watch, lest harm should come to them from prowling beasts of prey, or robber hordes. To the still waters he must lead them, that they may drink where no current shall frighten or endanger them. And at night he must conduct them back to the security of the fold.

At a certain season of the year, he must lead them yet further afield, far away from his own home and the haunts of men, where he will live amongst them scorched by the heat at noon, and drenched by the dews at night. Should one of the lambs be unable to keep pace with the rest of the flock, he must carry it in his bosom. Should one of his flock go astray, he must search for it until he finds it, tracking it by the tufts of wool left in the briars and thorns. Should danger assail, he must be prepared to risk his life. Shepherds in the East look like warriors armed for fight; the gun slung over the shoulder, pistols a t the belt, and club in hand.

"Living on such terms, the shepherd and his flock are almost friends. They know him and answer to their names. Some always follow close behind him, as his especial favorites, sure of his love. He can do almost as he wills with any of them, without exciting slightest symptom of alarm.

"Now all this is true of our Lord Jesus, having a shepherd's heart beating with pure and generous love that counted not too dear a price to pay down as our ransom. the that Great Shepherd of the Sheep, as He has a shepherd's eye, that takes in whole flock, and misses not even the poor sheep wandering away on the mountains cold. He has a shepherd's faithfulness, which will never fail, not forsake, nor leave us comfortless, nor flee when He seeth the wolf coming. He has a shepherd's strength, so that He is well able to deliver us from the jaw of the lion or the paw of the bear. He has a shepherd's tenderness; no lamb so tiny that He will not carry it; no saint so weak that He will not

gently lead; no soul so faint that He will not give it rest. He pities as a father. He comforts as a mother. His gentleness makes great. He covers us with His feathers, soft and warm and downy; and under His wings do we trust.

"I shall not want.' Amid all the sorrow and want of the world, the Lord's sheep are well supplied. The cry of the worldling is contained in the weary confession, "I perish with hunger." But the boast of the saint rings through the glad assurance, 'My God shall supply all your need, according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.'

"His hired servants have bread enough and the slight to spare; how much more his own! The young lions do lack and suffer hunger; but they that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing."

Chapter III

The Shepherd's Preparation and the Gorgeous Meadow "Green pastures" and "still waters"

It should be observed that all of the verbs in this twenty-third Psalm are in the present tense. They are strong verbs. "Because the Lord is my Shepherd, I have everything I need!" (Living Bible). "He compels" "He forces me to lie down." These are strong verbs. "He leads me." It has been observed that the waters were stilled. Sheep are afraid of rushing and fast flowing water. He quiets the spirit of His own.

Rest for the Weary

- I. **Rest in Tiredness.** "He maketh me to lie down in green pastures."
- II. **Refreshment in Thirst.** "He leadeth me beside the still waters"
- III. **Restoration in Turmoil.** "He restoreth my soul"
- IV. **Righteousness in Terror.** "He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name sake"
- V. **Relief in Tears.** "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil"
- VI. **Relaxation in Trial.** "Thy rod and thy staff they comfort me"!
- VIII. **Refuge in Tribulation.** "Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies"
- IX. **Reward in Toil.** "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life"
- X. **Reception in Triumph.** "I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever."

Thou Art My Shepherd

- I. Life is so full of distress needs – but Thou Sufficeth me. "I shall not want."
- II. Many times I become so tired and weary along the way – but Thou Sustaineth me. "Thou maketh me to lie down in green pastures."
- III. In this dry and parched land I suffer thirst – but Thou Satisfieth me. "He leadeth me beside the still waters."
- IV. My life was so entangled with sin and wrong – but Thou Savest me. "He restoreth my soul."
- V. Life is so full of perplexities and problems and I would stumble on the path to heaven –

but thou steadiest me. "He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness."

VI. When I become lonely and afraid – Thou Standest by me. "Thou art with me."

VII. Life has so many afflictions, heartaches, sorrows – but Thou Seest me. "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil for thou art with me."

VIII. Many times I feel so forlorn and weak – but Thou Supportest me. "Thy rod and thy staff they comfort me."

IX. Oft times I feel very hungry and oppressed – but Thou Servest me. "Thou prepareth a table before me in the presence of mine enemies."

X. I recognize I have a deep spiritual need, I long for cleansing and communion – but Thou Sanctifiest me, "Thou anointest my head with oil, my cup runneth over."

XI. All through this Christian Journey I am safe – for Thou Strengthenest me. "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life."

XII. This Christian life leads me from earth to heaven – for Thou Shelterest me. "I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever."

The good Shepherd knows what our needs are better than we do ourselves. Rest in green pastures or water from the quiet stream. We do need Him to care for us. The wisdom of the Shepherd is illustrated in the story of an American traveling in Syria who became acquainted with a shepherd. Each morning he noticed the shepherd carrying food to the sheep. The traveler followed him one morning and found that he was taking the food to one sheep that had a broken leg.

As he looked at the animal, he said to the shepherd, "How did the sheep break its leg? Did it meet with an accident, fall into a hole, or did some animal break the leg?"

"No," said the shepherd, "I broke sheep's leg myself."

"You broke it yourself?" queried the surprised traveler.

"Yes, you see, this was a wayward sheep; it would not stay with the flock, but would lead the other sheep astray. Then it would not let me get near it. I could not approach it, and so I had to break the sheep's leg that it might allow me day by day, to feed it. In doing this, it will get to know me as its shepherd, trust me as its guide, and keep with the flock."

I hope I can follow without needing such correction. If I need it, I do want to learn to trust the Shepherd. I say with M. M. Duncan –

Take Thou My Hand

Take Thou my hand, O Lord, I pray,
To help me on my weary way.
Be Thou my everlasting light
To lead me through the darkest night.

Take Thou my hand, with tender care,
And all my daily burdens share.
For loneliness and sorrows flee
When I am walking close with Thee.

O tender Shepherd, Thou will lead
To pastures where my soul may feed
And know the joys of love divine,
If Thou but take my hand in Thine.

Take Thou my hand, through fear and strife,
That I may know the hope of life.
And then, how eased the road will be
That leads me home, at last, to Thee.

The story of the shepherd who brought his flock to the fast flowing mountain stream has a wonderful truth to give us. The stream was high and rushing with turbulence from the recent rain. The sheep were afraid to cross. The wise shepherd gathered a lamb in his arms and forded the stream. Soon, the mother ewe followed, and very soon the whole flock was safe on the other side.

The wise heavenly Shepherd in His wisdom sometimes sees fit to gather one near and dear to us and carry them across the turbulent stream of death. This can be a valuable lesson to us if we can but follow our good Shepherd to the Life beyond the river.

Sheep are really so dependent upon their shepherd. The shepherd must carefully tend the flock. Those who have seen say it is a beautiful sight in the Holy Land to see the shepherds lead their flocks. The noon hour is generally the time to watch the flock. From far and near, the shepherd calls his flock and walks before them. He leads them to green pastures and to still waters. Some unknown author to me has written—

"The Lord is my Shepherd
By night and by day;
We need never worry,
While He leads the way.

When valleys are shadowed,
He holds out His hands
And guides us through safely
For He understands.

Human footsteps may falter
When pathways turn steep
And courage forsakes us
When waters grow deep.

So ever so gently,
He leads us with care,
There is never a burden
That He doth not share."

Abel, the second son of Adam, was "keeper of sheep". From that Genesis reference to the last reference where Peter tells us "when the Chief Shepherd shall appear," we find the human likeness to sheep and the Divine likeness to the shepherd.

Let me comment to our dear Indian friend. Jesus is here called Chief Shepherd. He is the greatest Chieftain of all time. It was Shepherds abiding in the fields who received the first angelic announcement that the Savior was born. There, amidst the sheep and cattle, he had his lowly birth. F. B. Meyer comments regarding our Shepherd and the Psalmist who gave to us this wonderful Psalm:

"Three thousand years have passed away since the sweet singer of Israel first sung this Psalm about the shepherd-care of God, Thirty centuries! It is a long time! And in that vast abyss, all the material relics of his life, however carefully treasured, have moulded into dust.

"The harp, from the strings of which his fingers swept celestial melody, the tattered banner, which he was wont to uplift in the name of the Lord; the well-worn book of the law, which was his meditation day and night; the huge sword, with which he slew the giant; the palace chamber, from which his spirit passed away to join the harpers harping with their harps – all these lie deep amid the debris of the ages. . .

"But this Psalm, though old, is as fresh today as though it were just composed. Precious words! They are the first taught to our children, and perhaps the Holy Child Himself first learned to repeat them in the old Hebrew tongue beside His mother's knee in Nazareth; and they are amongst the last that we whisper in the ear of our beloved ones, standing in the twilight between the darkening day of earth and the breaking day of heaven. The sufferer in the sick chamber; the martyr at the stake; the soldier on his sentry duty, the traveler amid many perils, the Covenanter – these, and a multitude which no man can number, have found in these words a lullaby for fear, an inspiration to a new life and hope. 'The Lord is my Shepherd; I shall not want.'"

The West where we have spent most of our years – Nebraska, the Dakotas, Wyoming, and Montana – are blessed with many large ranches. It is the delight of any rancher to have a large meadow for hay for his stock. God has a big pasture for his people. It is all meadow.

Alexander Maclaren states in his commentary, "God leads His sheep into rest. 'He maketh me to lie down in green pastures, He leadeth me beside the still waters.' It is the hot noontide, and the desert lies baking in the awful glare, and every stone on the hills of Judea burns the foot that touches it. But in that panting, breathless hour, here is a little green glen, with a quiet brooklet, and moist lush herbage all along its course, and great stones that fling a black shadow over the dewy grass at their base; and there would the shepherd lead his flock, while the sunbeams, like swords, are piercing everything beyond that hidden covert. Sweet silence broods there. The sheep feed and drink, and couch in cool lairs till he calls them forth again. So God leads His children"

The psalm puts the rest and refreshment first, as being the most marked characteristic of God's dealings.

Before leaving this blessed thought of the meadow, let us again look at the "still waters." Jesus, talking to the woman at the well, told her, "Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again. But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst." In the last day of the great Feast of Tabernacles, Jesus cried, "If any man thirst let him come unto me and drink." Jesus is

interested in the spiritual needs of man. In the Beatitudes He declared, "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness for they shall be filled." Saints, eat and rest in God. Thirsty soul, drink from the Fountain that never runs dry. F. B. Meyer entitles his words, "*Pastures of Tender Grass and Waters of Rest*." "He maketh me to lie down in green pastures; He leadeth me beside the still waters."

"In this sweet pastoral symphony, the first verse gives the air, when it tells us that there is no want to the man who lives under the shepherd-care of God. In the succeeding verses the harmony is worked out, and the music in all its completeness is rendered effectively.

"The first want which, according to this verse, he who belongs to Christ shall never know, is the want of rest. This verse breathes the very spirit of rest, as is even more apparent in a more literal rendering of the words. It may be rendered thus: 'He maketh me to lie down in pastures of tender grass. He leadeth me beside the waters of rest.'

"What a delightful scene is thus conjured up before our fancy! It is the scorching hour of an Eastern noon. The air is stifling with fever heat, and all the landscape is baking in the awful glare. The very stones upon the hills burn the feet that touch them. At such a time woe be to the flock without a shepherd; and to the shepherd who cannot find the blue shade of some great rock, the shelter of some bushy dell, or the rich and luscious pasturage of some lowland vale!

"But there is no such failure here. See where the pellucid stream is rolling its tide through the level plain. Higher upward in its bed, when it was starting on its course, it foamed and fretted over its rocky channel; leapt from ledge to ledge, chafed against its restraining banks, and dashed itself into a mass of froth and foam. No sheep would have drank of them; for the flocks will never drink of turbid or ruffled streams. But now it sweeps quietly onward as if it were asleep – there is 'hardly a ripple on its face; every flower and tree and sedge, as well as the overhanging banks, is clearly mirrored on its surface; and every stone in its bed may be clearly seen.

On its banks the pasture is always green and luxuriant, carpeted in spring by a thousand flowers; the very air is cooled by its refreshing presence, and the ear is charmed by the music of its purling waters. No drought can come where the river flows; and the flocks, satisfied by browsing on the tender grass, lie down satisfied and at rest.

"In the end the Good Shepherd gave His life for the sheep. No hireling coward He! His all was at stake! The flock was His own given Him by his father; and He laid down His life for it! . . .

"A hungry sheep will not lie down. Main force will fail in making it do so. But the shepherd who can provide it with plenty of good pasturage will soon bring the most restless animal to lie contentedly among the fragrant herbage, while birds may settle on its woolly back, and bees murmur drowsily around.

"We can never rest so long as the hunger of the spirit is unappeased and the thirst unslaked." It has been well stated "among all the Psalms, the twenty-third is the 'pet lamb' of the flock of many."

I. Endearment – "The Lord is my Shepherd"

II. Endowment – "I shall not want"

- III.** Encouragement – "He maketh me to lie down in green pastures"
- IV.** Enjoyment – "He leadeth me beside the still waters"
- V.** Enrichment – "He restoreth my soul:
- VI.** Enlightenment – "He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake"
- VII.** Encompassment – "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil"
- VIII.** Enforcement – "for thou art with me"
- IX.** Entrenchment – "thy rod and thy staff they comfort me"
- X.** Entertainment – "Thou preparest the presence of a table before me in mine enemies"
- XI.** Enduement – "thou anointest my head with oil"
- XII.** Excitement – "my cup runneth over"
- XIII.** Establishment – "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life"
- XIV.** Enrollment – "and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever."

Chapter IV

The Shepherd Pilot and the Gracious Escort "He leadeth me in paths of righteousness."

The Divine Escort

This psalm directly or indirectly speaks of seven areas of leadership with the Divine Shepherd.

- I. Leadeth into shady pastures – "He maketh me to lie down in green pastures"
- II. Leadeth beside still pools – "Leadeth me beside the still waters"
- III. Leadeth in spiritual paths – "He leadeth me in paths of righteousness"
- IV. Leadeth through shadowy places – "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil for Thou art with me."
- V. Leadeth before savory provisions – "Thou preparest a table before me"
- VI. Leadeth with steadfast protection – "Goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life."
- VII. Leadeth to a sacred pavilion – "I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever."

It is so comforting to be led by the Divine Escort. Maclaren states it thus: "The sheep are led by many a way, sometimes through sweet meadows, sometimes limping along sharp-flinted, dusty highways, some times high up over rough, rocky mountain passes, sometimes down through deep gorges, with no sunshine in their gloom; but they are ever being led to one place, and when the hot day is over they are gathered into one fold, and the sinking sun sees them safe, where no wolf can come, nor any robber climb up any more, but all shall rest forever under the Shepherd's eye."

The little phrase, "He restoreth my soul," is among the most treasured and priceless words of this Psalm. The saints of God who make up His flock are deeply conscious of the need of the restoring grace of the Good Shepherd. This is our experience. We become weary, not *of* the way, but *in* the way.. resting in the pasture of His Word; drinking from the fountain of His love and Spirit restores us in our souls! The Shepherd Pilot will lead us in paths of righteousness. If we are not growing in grace we better observe the path we are traveling. We may be following the wrong pilot.

Our Need of a Shepherd

Isaiah 53, Psalm 23, Luke 15, and John 10...all liken us to sheep.

These same scriptures all liken Jesus to a shepherd.

He who became our shepherd first became as a sheep. "As a sheep before his shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth." "All we like sheep have gone astray, we have turned everyone to

his own way, and the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all." Looking across ages, the Father saw every man, woman, boy and girl. All the black ones, all the yellow ones, all the brown ones, all the white ones. All the black haired, all the brunettes, blondes, dish-water blondes, red haired, even all the bald-headed ones. He saw every sin and every sinner. The prostitutes, gamblers, murders, thieves, and "the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all." This included your sin and mine.

I. Like sheep we are forgetful creatures. As children need a mother, so sheep need a shepherd to care for them. "Forget not all His benefits" "The Lord is my Shepherd" (Psalm 103:1-5).

II. Like sheep we are feeble creatures. We are dependent for about everything. "I shall not want." "Wherefore lift up. . . and the feeble knees" (Hebrews 12:12).
all liken Jesus to John 10.

III. Like sheep we are fretful creatures. Sheep are restless until fed and will not lie down until they are full. "He maketh me to lie down in green pastures." "Fret not thyself because of evil doers" (Psalm 37:1).

IV. Like sheep we are fearful creatures. Sheep have heavy wool and are poor swimmers. They are afraid to drink from fast running water. "He leadeth me beside the still waters." "Fear thou not for I am with thee; be not dismayed for I am thy God" (Isaiah 41:10).

V. Like sheep we are frail creatures. Sheep are timid and gentle; and they are easily injured. "He restoreth my soul." "This poor man cried and the Lord heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles" (Psalm 34:6).

VI. Like sheep we are foolish creatures. Cats, dogs, and horses all seem to have a built-in compass. They find their way home. Not sheep. They are near-sighted and easily lose their way. "He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake." "An highwayman. . . wayfaring though fools, not err therein" (Isaiah 35:8).

VII. Like sheep we are fidgety creatures. Many places are dangerous to sheep. They are an easy prey to wild beasts. They are very restless and scatter easily. "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for thou art with me." Psalm 23:4.

VIII. Like sheep we are faint-hearted creatures. Of the domestic animals the sheep seems to be the most helpless. "Thy rod and thy staff they comfort me." "He giveth power to the weary. walk and not faint" (Isaiah 40:31).

IX. Like sheep we are famished creatures. With the break of day, sheep in the sheepfold begin to bleat. They seem always to be hungry. "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst" (Matthew 6:5). "Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies."

X. Like sheep we are frustrated creatures. Sheep are easily confused. They rush here and there in their fright. Like sheep we need to have our head touched by the Shepherd. "Thou anointest my head with oil, my cup runneth over."

XI. Like sheep we are following creatures. "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life." (In a later chapter, I wish to comment on the nature of sheep to follow.)

XII. Like sheep we are forlorn creatures. Sheep always seem to have a restless, frightened, forlorn attitude when the Shepherd gets out of sight. They seem to be seeking a better country. "I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever."

Someone has said, "We are lonely travelers across this great expanse of wilderness called life." Another has said, "So long as men like sheep will stray from the fold, they need a shepherd." Our journey through life with many perils calls for a shepherd. Our own natural tendency to stray calls for a shepherd. Sheep are thought to be the most helpless creatures of the domestic world. A large ram may become mean if teased and will bunt another animal or person. Actually, however, sheep cannot fight; they do not know how. It is foreign to their nature. They need a shepherd.

To enlighten this truth, Meyer again comments – "The growl of a lion, the bark of a dog, the presence of a little child, will be quite sufficient to spoil the rest of a flock of sheep and to drive them trembling and timid into an affrighted group. And how can we rest so long as we feel ourselves liable to the attack of the roaring lion of the pit? Who can rest so long as eternal destinies lie uncertainly in the balance?"

Against all this our Shepherd Jesus provided. He has Himself met the great adversary of our souls and has forever broken his power. . .

"The tenderest shepherd cannot bring a flock of sheep to rest unless they follow him. If they lag far behind him, if they go astray from him, if they take their own several ways – then, however good the shepherd's intentions, they cannot but be thwarted and frustrated. 'My sheep,' said Christ, 'hear my voice; and I know them, and they follow me. '"

Thus, we see anew our need for heavenly Escort.

"He leadeth me." What a wondrous link between those two personal pronouns! The chasm between the Shepherd in glory and His poor sheep might seem to be an infinite one; but it is bridged by this one sweet tender word, 'leadeth'. As in the East the shepherd always precedes the flock, to discover the greenest patches of grass and the least stony path, so does Jesus ever keep in front of the soul that trusts and loves him. And it is our art to allow as small a space as possible to intervene between his footsteps and our own. .

"It is the business of the shepherd to lead the willing sheep aright. The only thing which obstructs His guidance is the obtuseness of the heart and will; we are frequently too self-willed or too impetuous to await His time.

"In the previous verse the Psalmist declared the shepherd led beside still waters and the inference might have been that when the feet were cut, or the muscles strained by the clamber up the rocky mountain track; or that when the course lay amid deep, damp glen, overshadowed by heavy forests and overhanging rocks – at such times the sheep was following its own wild way, outside the tender guidance of its Lord. And so the Psalmist takes up the metaphor again, and tells us that there are other walks by which the Shepherd is leading us to our Home. Not always beside the gently streamlet flow; but sometimes by the foaming torrent. Not always over the delicate grass; but sometimes up the stony mountain track. Not always in the sunshine; but sometimes through the valley of the shadow of death. But whichever way it is, it is the right way, and it is the way Home.

Tell us thy name, O wondrous Shepherd, going on before, and leading us by the way of

Gethsemane and Calvary to the garden of the Easter morn, and the sword of the Ascension Mount!
And as we catch Thine answer, melodious with love, we will trust and not be afraid; we will follow
Thee whithersoever Thou goest; and we believe that we shall find that no step of the path was
inconsistent with the leadings of a Love, wise and strong and tender as the heart of God!"

A Wandering Sheep

I was a wandering Sheep,
Far from the Shepherd's fold;
I climbed the mountain steep,
With footsteps firm and bold.
I heard the Shepherd's voice,
"Come, child of Mine, come home;"
But wandering was my choice,
And my delight to roam.

The sun was high o'erhead,
The summer air was sweet,
The springing grasses spread
A carpet for my feet.
I heard the Shepherd call,
"Come, child of mine, come home;"
It stirred me not at all,
For still I chose to roam.

The night came swift and chill,
The rain fell thick and fast,
The thunder shook the hill,
I fled before the blast.
I heard the Shepherd plead,
"Come, child of Mine, come home;"
But though I felt my need,
I knew naught but to roam.

The Shepherd left the fold,
And through the darkness deep,
Upon the mountain cold,
He sought His wandering sheep.
He found me in the storm
And bore me safely home;
Now, circled by His arm; I've no desire to roam.
– Author Unknown

The Shepherd's Protection and the Gentle Presence "Valley. . .
shadow of death," "Thou art with me."

Chapter V

The Shepherd's Protection and the Gentle Presence

"Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death . . . Thou art with me."

Perhaps no passage of scripture has brought more comfort to bereaved loved ones than these words of this blessed Psalm. "Valley," "shadow," and "death" are dark words. "Thou are with me" brings the Divine presence into this darkness to make it light.

The Great Shepherd

- A. A Fragrant Psalm
- B. A Forceful Psalm
- C. A Favorite Psalm

I. Relationship – "The Lord is my Shepherd."

II. Resource – "I shall not want."

III. Repose – "He maketh me to lie down in green pastures."

IV. Refreshment – "He leadeth me beside the still waters."

V. Restoration – "He restoreth my soul."

VI. Reliance – "He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness."

VII. Reason – "For His name's sake."

VIII. Refuge --"Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil."

IX. Remembrance – "For thou art with me."

X. Relief – "Thy rod and thy staff they comfort me."

XI. Repast – "Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies."

XII. Revival – "Thou anointest my head with oil."

XIII. Rejoicing – "My cup runneth over."

XIV. Reward – "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life."

XV. Reunion – "And I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever."

Conclusion: Outstanding things in this Psalm:

- A. The Shepherd
- B. The Sheep
- C. The Shadow
- D. The Staff
- E. The Surety

This truth has become very precious to me. I passed through this valley when we laid our first-born baby to rest. This was very real to me while one dear white brother and a few Indian men stood by, as we wept and prayed together at the graveside. Some years later I laid my dear companion to rest and again and in a very personal way passed through the dark valley of the shadow of death. This truth, "Thou art with me" gave light in a dark place.

Several years ago I was in an automobile accident. With a fractured skull and a period of unconsciousness, I again learned way of the valley of death; and in very precious way I felt the Divine "Thou art with me."

Many have been the times in sharing with others, I have passed through the valley. I am also certain that in God's good providence He has protected us on numerous occasions when we were not aware of it.

The sweetest companionship one can know is this relationship with your Lord and Shepherd.

The Comfort of the Sheep

All the comfort we need is found in this Psalm.

I. The Comfort of Person – "The Lord is my Shepherd."

II. The Comfort of Plenty – "I shall not want."

III. The Comfort of Position – "He maketh me to lie down"

IV. The Comfort of Provision – "He restoreth my soul."

V. The Comfort of a Pilot – "He leadeth me in paths of righteousness for His name's sake."

VI. The Comfort of a Presence – "Yea, though I walk through the valley of shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for thou art with me."

VII. The Comfort of a Rod – "Thy rod and thy staff they comfort me."

VIII. The Comfort of a Promise – "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me."

IX. The Comfort of a Period – "All the days of my life."

X. The Comfort of a Paradise – "I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever."

Many serve the Lord through fear. When we do His will, "perfect love casteth out fear." Slavish fear is not akin to grace. In Christian life we need to perform in strict obedience to our Shepherd; then to joyfully trust him. What comfort comes from this sweet relationship. Life is full of sorrows. What a comfort is found in the midst of sorrow to find our Shepherd with us. F. B. Meyer comments on this verse are very strong.

"In all Scripture there is no verse more familiar than this. No Bible figure has made a more lasting or indelible impression. This picture of the close of our lives, with a dark valley at the end of their sunny pathway, was hung up long ago, in the halls of memory, as we first learned to lisp these venerable words; and though much has happened since then, it holds its place, and will whilst memory endures. In millions of cases these have been the last words uttered by dying saints:

"I think I see that valley now; the Shepherd is conducting His flock toward their fold in luxuriant pastures and in quiet resting places. But suddenly the path turns downward, and begins to wind towards the ravine below. On the one side is a precipice, yawning in sheer descent to the steep river bed, where the water foams and roars, torn by jagged rocks. On the other side the mountain firs cast sombre shadow in the deepening twilight. The path still plunged downward until it passes into a deep and narrow gorge by the frowning battlements of rock, which almost touch overhead; whilst the trees join hands, bough enclasping bough. It would be dark there in the most brilliant moon.

To linger after sundown would be to court ague. All along its course are the lairs and haunts of ravenous beasts. Such is the valley of the shadow of death; through which the Great Shepherd once went alone, and by which He now conducts all His flock to their home. The foremost ranks have long ago emerged into the sunshine; others are now passing through its dark shadows; and ere long we too may be beneath them. . .

"A shadow is the exact counterpart of its substance. But it is not in itself harmful. The shadow of a dog cannot bite; of a giant, cannot kill; of death, cannot destroy. The prophet says death is a veil cast over the face of all nations; but a veil is harmless enough. Besides, you cannot have a shadow unless there be a bright light shining somewhere. The shadow is temporary, the light eternal; for 'God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all.'"

Dear saint, rejoice the Good Shepherd is with us even with shadow nearby.

There is a sense in which we all are His little ones. There is a definite interest on the part of the Divine Shepherd over the young in the way. Reverend Walter Knight tells of the late Dr. Riley who was met at the depot by a Scotch ranchman. The minister was to be entertained in the home of the Scotchman. On the way to the ranch, Dr. Riley's host seemed strangely disinclined to talk. An expression of sadness pervaded his countenance. Finally, the reason for the sheep-tender's grief was disclosed. Said he, "Dr. Riley, the wolves got fifty of my lambs last night!" After expressing his sympathy at his host's loss, Dr. Riley asked, "And how many sheep did they get?" The shepherd looked in astonishment at the minister. He said, "*Dr. Riley, don't you know that a wolf will not bother a sheep when it can get a lamb?*"

We must place every safeguard about the lambs, the boys and girls. It is said that some seventeen million of them, over the nation, never cross the threshold of any church.

The valley of spiritual death as well as the valley of physical death is filled with dark shadows. The

Great Shepherd is ever present, wishing to guide and protect His children.

'Twas a Sheep Not A Lamb

'Twas a sheep, not a lamb that strayed away
In the parable Jesus told;
A grown-up sheep that had gone astray
From the ninety and nine in the fold.
Out in the meadows, out in the cold,
'Twas a sheep the Good Shepherd sought;
Back to the flock and into the fold.
'Twas a sheep the Good Shepherd brought.
Why, for the sheep, should we earnestly long
And so earnestly hope and pray,
Because there is danger, if they go wrong,
They will lead the young lambs astray.
For the lambs follow the sheep, you know,
Wherever the sheep may stray;
If the sheep go wrong, it will not be long
Till the lambs are as wrong as they.
So, with the sheep, we earnestly plead
For the safety of the lambs today.
If the lambs are lost, what a terrible cost
Some sheep may have to pay.

With the reflections of Dr. Riley over the lambs and the truth of this well known poem, it will behoove us to place greater value over our lads and lassies. They are our lambs. A brief article in the Sunday School Times ably tells the story.

Lambs Worth More Than Sheep

"Receive the instruction' (Proverbs 1:3). Suppose Paul had been converted at Seventy instead of twenty-five. There was a Matthew Henry because he was converted at eleven, and not at seventy; a Dr. Watts converted at nine and not at ninety; a Jonathan Edwards converted eight and not at eighty; a Richard Baxter converted at six and not at sixty. How much more is a soul worth that has a lifetime before it than the soul which has nothing. Lambs are of more worth than sheep in the realm of souls as well as in the market place. My child, listen to the instruction of the Godly!"

I thrill in the knowledge of God's love for His flock. If we faithfully, both young and old, follow the Good Shepherd, He will lead us through this vale of tears, safe – to the eternal shelter of His fold.

"Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil for Thou art with me."

The Shepherd of Christ's Sheep The Comforting Shepherd

The Lord my Shepherd is
He makes down to lie
Where grass is tall in pasture green
With quiet waters by.

In righteous paths He leadeth me
He restores my soul
All is done for His name's sake
As passing ages roll.

Yea, though I walk the valley of death
I will fear no ill.
For thou art with me all the way
Thy staff doth comfort still

Thou preparest a table for me
In rapturous, blessed mood
While enemies are looking on
I eat the heavenly food.

Thou anointest my head with oil
My cup it runs o'er
With joy and love and happiness
And blessings abundantly more.

Goodness and mercy shall follow me
All the days of my life.
Forever dwelling in God's house
To rest from earthly strife.

In closing this chapter and in preparation for chapter VI, The Shepherd's Provision and the Banquet, it would be beneficial to take a look into the life of the Apostle Peter. To witness the Master's love for Peter and His desire for Peter's love are both very enlightening. This love, though personal, had a far-reaching effect to include the whole flock of God.

"So when they had dined, Jesus said to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these? He saith unto him, Yea, lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs. He saith to him again, the second time, Simon, son of Jonas lovest thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my sheep. He saith unto him the third time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me?. Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto him Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep" (John 20:15-17).

Peter had betrayed his Lord. Jesus had warned him. "And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not; and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren" (Luke 22:31-32). There is a tender appeal in the scriptures when the Lord speaks and twice calls the name. Notice – "Abraham, Abraham!", "Samuel, Samuel!", "Martha, Martha!", "Saul, Saul!", and Peter, "Simon, Simon!" If Peter heard this warning, there may not have been this scar in his walk with the Lord.

Peter returned to his old Leisure. He followed Jesus afar off as He was led to trial. He "went in, and sat with the servants to see the end." We see him later warming at the enemies' fire. If ever our Lord needed Peter and the disciples, it was in this hour. Peter having been a fisherman, as they would say traditionally, returned to his old Lying. He denied his Lord. This led him deeper in wrong for he returned to his old Language. In his denial he began to curse and swear. After Jesus was crucified, Peter took the leadership in going back to his old Life. He declared, "I go a fishing". He had been a fisherman before his conversion. Certain of the disciples said, "We also go with thee." He not only went back to the sea to the old Location, but he took others with him. Now we see him in his old Labor. They toiled all night and "caught nothing". When Jesus appeared in the morning on the shores of Tiberias and Peter realized it was the Lord, "he girt his fisher's coat unto him (for he was naked)". He had returned to his old Looks. The Apostle John saw Jesus first. As they stood there side by side, they responded in different manners. John was the first to perceive it was the Lord; Peter was the first to struggle to get to him. John's love was more quickly to discern, but Peter's impulse was more quickly to be stirred to action.

Before considering Jesus' discourse with Peter and his shepherd's commission, it would be good to notice Jesus' approach and tactics in dealing with Peter:

A. A Supernatural Manifestation – The Miracle of Fish

Jesus had not been in the boat throughout the night. When Peter drew in the net, there were 153 fish in it. Fishermen, let me say that you need the Fisher of men with you in the boat. The miracle of fish brought a very precious lesson to Peter.

B. A Significant Manifestation – The Miracle of Food

After a night of fruitless toil, Peter would have been weary and hungry. The catch of fish lifted his spirit. The fish cooked by our Lord by the seaside satisfied his hunger and strengthened him for the lessons he wished to teach him.

C. A Special Message – The Miracle of Feeding

Peter likely remembered Jesus telling them on the night of His betrayal, "It is written, I will smite the Shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad." Peter was ready to listen to Jesus. Charles C. Spurgeon presents the truth by suggesting: First, the time was opportune; second, the provisions were desirable; and third, the host was condescending. "So when they had dined" Jesus spoke personally and tenderly to Simon Peter.

I. Threefold Asking

A. "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou more than these?" Jesus asked Peter thrice if he loved him. The first time he asked him he added the words "More than these". Jesus never asks him again. It is evident that it came a settled issue between Peter and his Lord.

1. There is a question as to what Jesus meant by "more than these". He could have pointed at the ships the nets and the things that had previously made up Peter's life. He could have inferred, "Do you love me more than these temporal things?"

2. Peter's brother Andrew stood nearby. His fishing partners James and John and other friends looked on. Jesus could have motioned to say "Do you love me more than your earthly relatives and closest friends?" This is a fair question.

3. If Jesus had pointed to the other disciples he could have questioned "Peter, do you love

me more than these other disciples love me?" You remember Peter had previously declared, "though all men be offended because of thee, yet will I never be offended".(Matt. 26:33) This was a searching question. John Wesley believes this was what Jesus was asking.

4. The sandy seashore, the rolling sea, the boats with their sails and the smell of fish had been Peter's way of life. This was what he was doing when Jesus called, "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men" (Matt. 4:19). Peter had left his nets to follow Jesus and now he had returned. Jesus could have pointed at the surroundings and asked, "Peter, do you love me more than your old occupation?" Halley's Handbook states that perhaps Jesus gently chided Him for returning to his fishing business.

5. Someone said, "The Lord made three fourths of the world water and one fourth land, so anyone should know He planned for everyone to spend three fourths of their time fishing." It would have been an ardent fisherman that coined such an expression. Without doubt Peter enjoyed fishing; most men do. Our Lord, who knew Peter's thoughts better than Peter knew may have pointed at the fishing gear which Peter enjoyed and questioned, "Do you love me more than the pleasures of life?" Whatever Jesus was asking of Peter he seemed to know. Jesus seemed very much concerned about the supreme degree of Peter's love. His love for His Lord was to be paramount.

B. "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me?" came from the lips of Jesus a second time. Many believe that since Peter was so vocal in his denial of the Lord in the Judgement Hall, that He wanted to question him three times, which was the number of times of denial. Since man is a triune being, Jesus wanted all of Peter's devotion. His emotions, which were the seat of his affections, were to be stirred with heart love for Him, His intellect which controlled his thought life, was to be subjected to a love for his Master. He also wanted his will, that part of his nature that affected life's choices, to be under divine control. Peter's affections, his resolutions, and all his actions were to be in submission to his Lord. Jesus accordingly questioned a second time, "Peter, do you love me?"

C. "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me?" came from the lips of our Lord the third time. Jesus had a work for Peter to do. Nothing less than a heart full of the love of God would equip him for the task. Paul describes it in I Corinthians 13 thus "and have not love, I am nothing" and "love never faileth". Jesus felt it important to direct this all important question to Peter, "Simon, son of Jonas lovest thou me?" Peter, returned to divine favor, could say for himself and for all, "For we were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your soul" (I Peter 2:25).

II. A Threefold Answering

There are two Greek verbs that signify love. As used here they are agopao and phileo. Agopao carries with it the thought of devotional love and high esteem. There are places in the scripture in which the root word agapa is used to express love where divine assistance accompanies the love. It appears to be a stronger word for love than phileo, which denotes to tenderly love, to cherish, have affection or to feel a fondness. This is also a strong word. Some believe it carries with it some element of the natural, human affection.

A. "Lovest Thou Me?" Jesus first asked with the Greek word agapas. Peter's was, "Yes, Lord, thou knowest that I love thee." Peter used the word philo. He did not use the stronger word for

love. His manner and his words both expressed tender affection for the Lord.

B. "Lovest Thou Me?" The second time Jesus asked with the Greek word *agapas*. Peter's answer was the same, "Yes, Lord, thou knowest that I love thee." He repeated the word *philo*. Peter's self-confidence was all gone, but he sweetly tells the Lord again that he loves him.

C. "Lovest Thou Me?" The third time Jesus questions Peter, he changes the verb from *agopao* to *phileo*, and in the second person uses Peter's own word to ask him if he loves him. From McLaughlin's Commentary: "he changes.. the word Peter has been using and says, 'Do you tenderly love me?' Peter was grieved because he asked him the third time. There was no doubt brought to his mind, the three denials of his Master – the last one with an oath – and it cut him to the heart. We think Jesus meant to ask the question thus: 'Do you really tenderly love me?' He realizes that the keen rebuke is from one who knows his heart, and he appeals to the Searcher of Hearts to testify that he loves him.

Jesus does not deny that Peter loves him tenderly. "Peter, one of the inner circle, who had witnessed the transfiguration on the Mount; who went with James and John "a little farther" into the garden Gethsemane on the Night of Jesus' trial; and had prepared his heart to tarry in the upper room at Pentecost had learned a valuable lesson that would aid him in the years to come to be a bold spokesman for the disciples in the defense of his Master. Out of the deep of his heart he could say, "*Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee.*"

III. A Threefold Assignment

A. The Greek word Jesus first used to commission Peter as a Shepherd was "*Boske*" meaning to feed. He was to pasture the flock where their hunger could be satisfied. Nourishment is so important to growth and contentment. Hungry sheep have a tendency to wander.

B. The Greek word Jesus uses the second time is "*poimaino*". It refers to one who tends the flock, a shepherd, a herdsman, a pastor, a superintendent or a guardian. The first word used has to do with the person. Peter was commissioned to shepherd or tend the flock. It is interesting to note the word for pastor is the same as shepherd.

C. The third time Jesus commissions Peter he returns to the first word used "*Boske*". Jesus is vitally interested in the nourishment of the flock. He didn't say herd or drive my sheep. He did not say shear my sheep. Jesus did not say slaughter my sheep. He said, "Feed my sheep".

IV. A Threefold Application

Let's return to the words for sheep, and observe the Master tenderly saying, "My lambs" and "My sheep".

A. "Feed my lambs." In prophetic revelation the prophet Isaiah describes the Good Shepherd. "He shall feed his flock like a shepherd; he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young." Jesus tenderly loves the lambs. They are the first of his flock that he commissions Peter to feed. The Biblical Encyclopedia relates an incident that shows the true heart of a shepherd: "Many, many years ago, when taking my walk along the base of Schielhallion, one of the loftiest Highland mountains, I met a shepherd, a regular attender on my Sabbath meetings.

He had his plaid closely wrapped about him and had evidently something in it that he was

carrying with unusual care. After the usual friendly salutation, I said, "What is this, Malcolm, that you have got in your plaid?" He answered, 'It is a poor forsaken lamb. When I was going my rounds this morning, I found it lying on the cold ground; its mother had left it, and it would soon have died. I took it up, wrapped it in my warm plaid, and am now carrying it home to my bothy.' "And what," I asked, "do you intend to do with it?" 'I will feed it', said the kind shepherd, 'and it will soon be one of the flock.' He did so. The poor forsaken lamb revived, grew, and became one of the liveliest and strongest sheep of the flock, while it must have pined and died if my kind friend had not had compassion on it."

Jesus' lambs and ours are not the fleecy, woolly domesticated sheep of the pasture, but our own boys and girls; our sons and our daughters. *It is for the children the loving shepherd is referring when he said, "Feed my lambs."*

B. "Feed My Sheep." B. A. McLaughlin comments "The word translated "sheep" in verse sixteen is a word meaning not lambs, but sheep partly grown, which are neither lambs or old sheep. Marshall's Interlinear Greek Testament translates the word "*probatia*" in both verses 16 and 17 as "little sheep". It is certain by Jesus saying in verse 16 "shepherd my sheep," he meant to include the youth as a part of the flock. How much our precious youth are needing the guidance of the shepherd who loves and cares. The young in the way surely need a shepherd. Jesus, a second time commissions, "*Feed my sheep.*"

C. "Feed My Sheep." G. A. McLaughlin interprets this commission of the 17th verse to mean "Full grown sheep". "Thus Jesus entrusts to his apostles the duty of feeding and tending all the ages and degrees of Christian experience; lambs, lambkins, and sheep."

Henry Alford comments, "Perhaps the feeding of the lambs was furnishing the apostolic testimony of the resurrection and facts of the Lord's life on earth to the first converts; the shepherding or ruling the sheep, the subsequent government of the church as shown forth in the early part of the Acts: the feeding of the *probatia* the choicest; the loved of the flock, the furnishing the now maturer church of Christ with the wholesome food of the doctrine contained in the Epistles."

Jesus was saying, "Feed, Shepherd, feed", "My lambs, my flock, my sheep". Peter so took this commission to heart that in his Epistle, chapter five and verses 1-4 he exhorts the elders, "Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof not for filthy lucre but of a ready mind. Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being examples to the flock. And when the Chief Shepherd shall appear ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away." Peter banqueted by the seaside with our Lord. May the lessons he learned be of such profit to all of us that we, too, can love Him better as we dine at His table.

Chapter VI

The Shepherd's Provision and the Great Banquet "Thy rod and thy staff they comfort me" "A table before me."

Evening Brings Us Home

Upon the hills the winds are sharp and cold, The sweet young grasses wither on the wold, And we,
O Lord, have wandered from Thy fold, But evening brings us home.

Among the mists we stumbled and the rocks, Where the brown lichen whitens and the fox watches
the straggler from the scattered flocks, But evening brings us home.

The sharp thorns prick us, and our tender feet Are cut and bleeding, and the lambs repeat Their
pitiful complaints – oh, rest is sweet, Where evening brings us home.

We have been wounded by the hunter's darts, Our eyes are very heavy, and our hearts Search for
Thy coming, when the light departs. At evening bring us home.

The darkness gathers, thro' the gloom no star rises to guide. We have wandered far, without Thy
lamp we know not where we are, At evening bring us home.

The clouds are round us and the snow – drifts thicken, O Thou, Dear Shepherd, leave us not to
sicken, In the waste night our tardy footsteps quicken At evening bring us home. – John Skelton

With James Hastings, we observe:

- I. **Courage** --"Valley of death. . . I will fear no evil."
- II. **Companionship** – "For thou art with me.
- III. **Comfort** – "Thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me."

In final comment from Reverend F. B. Meyer, I am impressed with his description of both the rod and the staff. Some scholars believe it was one and the same article used for more than one purpose. I like this description:

"What is the Shepherd's rod? It is surely the symbol of His defending power; it is the sceptre which He carries as the Supreme Shepherd ring. It is the weapon by which He strikes down our adversaries, even though it be heavy with chastisement for ourselves. In passing through some rocky fastness or shadowed valley where wild beasts have their lair and hill robbers hide in many a darkened cave, a shepherd needs to be armed with heavy club or ponderous rod that he may deal death-giving blows to lion or bear or stealthy thief imperiling the safety of one of his charge. And does not this suggest the protecting grace of Christ our Lord, who is ever on the alert to ward off from us threatening ills; whether they emanate from the Prince of the Power of the Air, or from those malicious human foes to whose presence in this life our Psalmist so often alludes, and who have their counterpart more or less in the lives of us all? . . .

"What is the staff? We would rather call it the shepherd's crook, which is often bent or hooked at one end. It is associated as inseparably with the shepherd as the goad is with the ploughman. Beneath it the sheep pass one by one to be numbered or told. By it the shepherd restrains them from wandering, or hooks them out of holes into which they may fall; by it also he corrects them when they are disobedient. In each of these thoughts there is comfort for the tried children of God.

"We are numbered amongst God's sheep as we pass one by one beneath the touch of the Shepherd's crook. Our names may be unknown amongst the great and learned; but they are written in heaven; our dwelling places may be lowly and ungarnished among the mansions and palaces of the rich; but we have 'houses not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.' Our sphere of ministry may be limited, and our work in the trenches preparing for the foundations far away from the shoutings with which the top-stone is placed upon a finished pile in the sunny air; but we shine as stars of the first magnitude in the sight of God.

"Through the valley with deathly shadows there is comfort. "He leadeth" or "He guideth with a protecting 'rod' and a correcting 'staff'," both bringing comfort.

"To continue the picture of the Shepherd and the sheep we must definitely realize the application is to the Shepherd Ring and His saintly flock. "Thou preparest a table before me." What a description of peace and joy it presents. The meal on the inviting wold. Here His sheep feed on the carpeted green. His fold is nearby. His table is full. His saints feasting in the Canaan land experience of grapes of Eschol and milk and honey.

The song writer gives it like this; "I've reached the land of corn and wine and all its riches freely mine." "Beulah Land," the experience where his people enjoy a heavenly banquet.

John Flemming, the great evangelist of a few short years ago, said when he was saved he had breakfast in the Lord; when he was sanctified, he had his spiritual dinner and now he was getting hungry for supper. *He would eat it in the marriage supper of the Lamb.* This will be beyond the gaze of our enemies. The fox and the wolf now lurk about in the shades of darkness as the sheep graze upon the sweet morsels of grass. Our enemy, the enemy of the soul, is slinking about seeking our destruction. Thank God for the Good Shepherd. "Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies." What a table! What a feast!

In the book, *Great Texts of the Bible*, by James Hastings he states that there are three acts in one drama:

- (1) Entertainment – "Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies."
- (2) Enjoyment – "Thou anointest my head with oil."
- (3) Enrichment – "My cup runneth over."

Some believe the picture changes here from a Shepherd to a Host; from the field to the home. We see the perfect Shepherd as a perfect Host.

The Perfect Shepherd

In striving for perfection, Psalm 23 gives several perfect examples.

- I. A Perfect Shepherd – "The Lord is my Shepherd."
- II. A Perfect Supply – "I shall not want."
- III. A Perfect Sleep – "He maketh me to lie down in green pastures."
- IV. A Perfect Satisfaction – "He leadeth me beside the still waters."
- V. A Perfect Salvation – "He restoreth my soul."
- VI. A Perfect Security – "He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness."
- VII. A Perfect Savior – "For his name's sake."
- VIII. A Perfect Serenity – "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil."
- IX. A Perfect Surety – "For Thou art with me."
- X. A Perfect Support – "Thy rod and thy staff they comfort me."
- XI. A Perfect Sustenance – "Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies."
- XII. A Perfect Sanctification – "Thou anointest my head with oil."
- XIII. A Perfect Saturation – "My cup runneth over."
- XIV. A Perfect Safeguard – "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me."
- XV. A Perfect Span – "All the days of my life."
- XVI. A Perfect Sanctuary – "I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever."

The oil used was perfumed oil, largely used in certain banquets as a mark of hospitality. The cup running over symbolized an abundant provision by a generous host. As Host of Heaven, our Shepherd offers a . . .

Perfect Redemption

- I. "The Lord is my Shepherd" – A Perfect redemption
- II. "I shall not want" – A perfect repletion
- III. "He maketh me to lie down in green pastures" – A Perfect reflection

- IV. "He leadeth me beside the waters" – A Perfect relaxation
- V. "He restoreth my soul" – A Perfect restoration
- VI. "He leadeth me in paths of righteousness" – A Perfect representation
- VII. "I will fear no evil" – A perfect reflection
- VIII. "Thou art with me" – A perfect regimentation
- IX. "Thy rod and Thy staff" – A perfect regulation
- X. "Thou preparest a table" – A Perfect reception
- XI. "Thou anointest my head" – A Perfect revelation
- XIII. "Goodness and mercy shall follow me" – A Perfect recollection
- XIV. "I will dwell. . .for ever" – A Perfect Resurrection

Alexander Maclaren describes the banquet. "It is as when the son of some great king comes back from foreign soil to his father's dominion, and is welcomed at every stage in his journey to the capital with pomp of festival, and messengers from the throne, until he enters at last his palace home, where the travel-stained robe is laid aside, and he sits down with his father at the table. 'God provides for us here in the presence of our enemies; it is wilderness food we get, manna from heaven, and water from the rock. We eat in haste, staff in hand and standing round the meal. But yonder we sit down with the Shepherd, the Master of the house, at His table in His kingdom. We put off the pilgrim dress, and put on the royal robe; we lay aside the sword and clasp the palm. Far off, and lost to sight, are all the enemies. We fear no change. We 'go no more out!'"

As to the anointing oil, "Thou anointest my head with oil, James Hasting comments on it thus:

"If the figure of the shepherd and his sheep is still retained, as some hold, then the anointing refers to a singularly beautiful custom which the Eastern shepherd has. It is the last scene of the day, at the door of the sheepfold. The shepherd stands, and the 'rodding of the sheep' takes place. The shepherd stands turning his body to let the sheep pass; he is the door, as Christ said of Himself. With his rod, he holds back his sheep while he inspects them one by one as they pass into the fold.

He has the horn filled with olive oil, and he has cedar tar, and he anoints a knee bruised on the rocks, or a side scratched by thorns, and here comes one that is not bruised but is simply worn and exhausted. He bathes its face and head with refreshing olive oil, and he takes the large two-handled cup and dips it brimming full from the vessel of water provided for that purpose and he lets the weary sheep drink. There is nothing finer in the Psalm than this. God's care is not for the wounded only, but for the worn and weary also. 'He anointest my head with oil, my cup runneth over'."

Chapter VII

The Shepherd's Paradise and the Glorious Sheepfold House of the Lord forever

"Goodness and mercy follow."

Scripture: Psalm 23:1-6
Text: Psalm 23:1. "The Lord is my Shepherd."
Subject: The Shepherd Psalm

Introduction: There are some basic interrogative pronouns and adverbs, who; what, when, and where. Let us together apply them to the shepherd Psalm.

- I. **Who** – "The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want."
- II. **Which** – "He maketh me to lie down in green pastures. He leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth 'my soul."
- III. **Whence** – "He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake."
- IV. **Why** – "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil, for Thou art with me. Thy rod and thy staff they comfort me."
- V. **What** – "Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies, thou anointest my head with oil. My cup runneth over." .
- VI. **When** – "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life."
- VII. **Where** – "I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever."

Jesus Is Our Shepherd

Jesus is our Shepherd; well we know His voice
How its gentlest whisper makes our heart rejoice!
Even when He chideth, tender is His tone;
None but He shall guide us, we are His alone.

Jesus is our Shepherd, for the sheep He bled.
Every lamb is sprinkled with the blood He shed.
Then on each He setteth His own secret sign!
They that have my Spirit these, saith He are mine.

Jesus is our Shepherd; guarded by His arm.
Though the wolves may ravin, none can do us harm;
When we tread death's valley, dark with dreadful gloom,
We will fear no evil, victors o'er the tomb.– Author Unknown

In "The Nightingale of the Psalms," Reverend Jarette Aycock stated that when Satan buffeted him and he was feeling friendless and alone "I got down upon my knees and I hadn't prayed long until I realized the presence of someone and behold, **(1)** God was there, for He said to me as he did to Joshua, 'Be strong and of a good courage; for the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest' and that made two of us; and as I continued to pray I would realize the presence of another, and behold **(2)** Jesus was there for He said, 'Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world,' and that made three of us, and presently I would recognize the presence of another and, behold, the **(3)** Holy Spirit was there, for He is to abide with us forever, and that made four of us, and then the **(4)** angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear Him, and that made five of us, and **(5)** goodness and mercy following made seven of us, and with God, the Father, God, the Son, and God the Holy Ghost leading on before, and the angel of the Lord encamping round about and goodness and mercy following all the days of my life, I would rise from my knees feeling I could run through a troop and leap over a wall, and win out for my Christ."

A Christian's Riches

They say in England some years ago it was felt that if a man walks he must be poor, if he sometimes calls a cab he is better off, if one footmen rides behind him he is rich, but if two are on the back of his carriage he must have a great inheritance. God has no poor children; they all have a great inheritance; two footmen are always behind. "Goodness and mercy shall follow me – all the days of my life." Or, goodness and mercy may be called God's watchdogs, following in the rear.

Isn't it comforting to know at times when we are misunderstood, when earth's possessions lie in ashes, when sickness comes and racks our frame, yes, and when bereavement comes and we lay the dearest of earth in a cold earthen grave that we have two friends always nearby. He has promised "surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life."

It Makes a Difference

A veteran stage star was asked to entertain at a large dinner party one evening. A ripple of excitement ran through the crowd of prominent and important guests as the great actor rose to speak. He chose the 23rd Psalm, and recited two verses before the audience realized they were in the presence of a master performer. . . He finished the recitation in a thunder of applause, and the crowd gave him a standing ovation as he walked to his seat.

The next speaker was an elderly white-haired man, bowed and worn by long years of patient labor as a missionary. "I, too, would like to recite the Shepherd's Psalm," he said quietly. Then, turning his face upward a little, and closing his eyes, he began. . . When he was through all was quiet, No one said a word. There was no applause. But there was not a dry eye in the room. . .

Afterward, a man approached the great actor. "I don't understand," he said, "You both said the same thing. Your presentation was perfect in every way. Yet, when he spoke in his halting, imperfect manner, people were moved too deeply for words. What made the difference?"

"I think I have the answer," replied the actor, "I know the 23rd Psalm, I know it well. But he knows the Shepherd!"

The Jewish legend

The Jew had a lovely legend to explain why God chose Moses to be the leader of His people. "When Moses was feeding the sheep of his father-in-law in the wilderness, a young kid ran away. Moses followed it until it reached a ravine, where it found a well to drink from. When Moses got up to it he said, "I did not know that you ran away because you were thirsty. Now you must be weary. He took the kid on his shoulders and carried it back. Then God said, "Because you have shown pity in leading back one of a flock belonging to a man, you shall lead my flock, Israel."

The Biblical Encyclopedia and Museum relates...

The Good Shepherd. How beautifully is the care and compassion of our gentle Savior illustrated by the conduct of an eastern shepherd. One of my friends traveling in Greece, some years since, met three shepherds with their flocks: one had under his care about 650 sheep, another about 700, and the third about 750, in all 2,100. These three flocks were put together. Each sheep had a separate name; it would not answer to any other name, nor even to its own, unless called by its own shepherd. Each shepherd knew all his sheep, and also their names, If he saw that one was going in a dangerous direction, he called it, and it retraced its steps. If the way was narrow or steep, he walked first and the sheep followed. It is exactly what the Bible says of Christ and His flock: "The sheep hear His voice: and He calleth His own sheep by name, and leadeth them out. And when He putteth forth His own sheep, He goeth before them and the sheep follow Him; 'for they know His voice. And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers." "I am the good Shepherd, and know My sheep, and am known of Mine." "I lay down My life for the sheep."

I read recently that in olden times the time of sheep-shearing was a very glad time. The neighbors gathered together, and they poured wine and danced for joy. The sheep were put in a place enclosed by a wall, where it was very easy to count them and know whether any of them had been taken to the Jackals or dogs. The enclosure was called the sheep fold. Good news I have to tell you, in that our Lord the Shepherd has a sheepfold, and those who are gathered in it shall never be struck by the storm, shall never be touched by the Jackals of temptation and trouble. It has a high wall – so high that no trouble can get in – so high that the joys cannot get out. How glad the old sheep will be to find the lambs that left them a good many years ago! Millions of children in heaven (abortion, etc.)! What a merry heaven it will make! It is good news fellow Christians. "Goodness and mercy shall follow us all the days of our life" and we shall dwell in God's big sheepfold in God's great house forever.

Two Doors in John

Barclay claims that Jesus tells us of two kinds of sheep-folds in John. "In the villages and towns there were communal sheepfolds where all the village flocks were sheltered when they returned home at night. These folds were protected by a strong door of which only the guardian of the door held the key. It is to that kind of a fold that Jesus refers in verses 2 and 3. But when the sheep were out on the hills in the warm season when they did not return at night to the village at all, at night they were gathered into sheepfolds out on the hillside. These hillside sheep-folds were just open spaces enclosed by a wall. In them there was an opening by which the sheep went in and came out, but there was no door of any kind. At night the shepherd himself lay down across the opening and entrance, and no sheep could get out or in except over his body. In the most literal sense the shepherd was the door. There was no access to the sheepfold except through him." This is no

doubt what Jesus was referring to when He said "I am the door."

G. Campbell Morgan tells of a story told by Sir George Adam Smith. He talked of the eastern lands he knew so well. "He was one day traveling with a guide and came across a shepherd and his sheep. He fell to conversation with him. The man showed him the fold into which the sheep were led at night. It consisted of four walls with a way in. Sir George said to him, "That is where they go at night?" "Yes," said the shepherd, "and when they are in there, they are perfectly safe." "But there is no door," said Sir George. "I am the door," said the shepherd. He was not a Christian man, he was not speaking in the language of the New Testament. He was speaking from the Arab shepherd's standpoint. Sir George looked at him and said, "What do you mean by the door?" Said the shepherd, "When the light has gone, and all the sheep are inside, I lie in that open space, and no sheep ever goes out but across by body, and no wolf comes in unless he crosses by body; I am the door."

The Song of the Shepherd

"The Lord is my Shepherd,"
I will follow along
And I shall not want
To Him I belong.

He maketh me down
In green pastures to lie
With the cool, sparkling waters
So quiet nearby.

My soul he restoreth
Nor my body doth quake
On the pathway of life
All for His sake.

In the valley of death
No evil I fear
The Shepherd is with me
His presence so near.

Thy rod and Thy staff
Art a comfort to me
The Lord's the Good
Shepherd Tho a hireling will flee.

The Good Shepherd welcomes
And opens the door
Known is His voice
And he goeth before.

His sheep gladly follow
Their shepherd by choice
A stranger ne'er follow

For they know not His voice.

He knoweth His sheep
The sick and the lame
He knoweth them all
And calleth each name.

The Good Shepherd giveth
His life for the sheep
He watcheth the foe
While they are asleep

The ninety and nine
Leaves out in the fold
To seek the lost stray
Out in the cold.

On His shoulder rejoicing
With the sheep He returns
In like manner o'er sinners
He lovingly yearns.

When the Chief Shepherd appeareth
In His heav'nly array
A crown of glory awaiteth
Nor fadeth away.

Safe in the fold
Where no evil can sever
I shall dwell in the house
Of the Good Shepherd forever.

The word Jehovah as referred to the "Lord" in the Shepherd's Psalm occurs about 7,600 times in the scriptures.

His Relationship

- I. Befriending me "my shepherd."
- II. Beneath me "green pastures."
- III. Beside me "still waters."
- IV. Below me "paths of righteousness."
- V. Before me "a table."
- VI. Beholding me "mine enemies."

- VII.** Within me “no fear.”
- VIII.** With me “thou art”
- IX.** By me “rod and staff.”
- X.** Before me “a table.”
- XI.** About me “mine enemies.”
- XII.** Over me “head with oil.”
- XIII.** From me “cup runneth over.”
- XIV.** After me “goodness and mercy.”
- XV.** Beyond me “house of the Lord.”

Revelation describes "the house of the Lord," that David the Psalmist writes about. The "no mores" of heaven are a list of seven in this chapter. If it were just the absence of suffering and pain it would be a wonderful place to dwell eternally. Yes, the negative side of heaven is enough to bless you beyond your ability to contain the blessing. "The house of the lord forever." (See Revelation 2).

- I.** No More Sea (vs. 4) – “And there was no more sea.”
- II.** No More Separation (vs. 4) – "There shall be no more death.”
- III.** No More Sorrow (vs. 4) – "Neither sorrow.”
- IV.** No More Sobbing (vs. 4) – "No crying.”
- V.** No More Suffering (vs. 4) – "Neither shall there be any more pain.”
- VI.** No More Sanctuary (vs. 22) – "And I saw no temple therein.”
- VII.** No More Sun (vs. 23) – "And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it; for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.”

Conclusion

If the negative side of heaven is so wonderful, what will the positive side be like? From the Bible, we learn that the house of the Lord is a city.

Heaven, a City..

A CITY never built with human hands, not aged with the years of time.

A CITY that lieth foursquare, and the length and breadth and height are equal.

A CITY whose wall has twelve foundations, laid with many different and costly stones.

A CITY whose inhabitants no census has ever numbered.

A CITY through whose streets rush no kind of business.

A CITY where no hearse creeps slowly with its burdens to a cemetery.

A CITY without griefs or graves, without sin or sorrow.

A CITY without births or burials; without marriage or mournings.

A CITY which glories in having Jesus for its King.

A CITY with angels for its guards, and saints for its citizens.

A CITY without sun or moon for light; for God is the light.

A CITY fully populated with the redeemed, and hosts of angels.

A CITY not now visible to the human eye, but eternally just above our New Earth.

A CITY of twelve gates, three on each of the four sides. Each one a pearl.

A CITY whose walls are salvation, and whose gates are our praise.

A CITY whose gates are not closed by day, for there is no night there.

A CITY with a pure River of Water of Life, clear as crystal from the throne of God.

A CITY with trees bearing twelve manner of fruit, yielding twelve times a year to eat.

A CITY most wonderful in all the universe.

Thank God for such a city – "the house of the Lord" and it is now being prepared for the saints. John's Gospel tells us this. "Let not your hearts be troubled. . .In my Father's house are many mansions. . .I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you I will come again and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." "The house of the Lord." "My Father's house." Think of all suffering and sorrow gone forever; the blessings of an eternal city and best of all the presence of God the Father, God the Son, our Great Shepherd and God the blessed Holy Spirit.

Chapter VIII

The Shepherd's Passion and the Gigantic, Gruesome Search

"An hundred sheep". . ."lose one". . . "go after until he find it?" Luke 15:3-7

Dr. Barclay very beautifully and graphically writes of this parable.

"There is no chapter of the New Testament so well known and so dearly loved as the fifteenth chapter of Luke's gospel. It has been called 'the gospel in the gospel,' as if it contained the very distilled essence of the good news which Jesus came to tell.

"These parables of Jesus arose out of a perfectly definite situation. It was an offence to the Scribes and Pharisees that Jesus accompanied and associated with men and women who, by the orthodox, were labeled as sinners. . .

". . . We will understand these parables more fully if we remember that the strict Jews said not 'There is joy in heaven over one sinner who repents,' but, 'There is joy in heaven over one sinner who is obliterated before God.' They looked sadistically forward not to the saving but to the destruction of the sinner.

"So Jesus told them the parable of the lost sheep and the shepherd's joy. The shepherd in Judea had a hard and dangerous task. Pasture was scarce. The narrow central plateau was only a few miles wide, and then it plunged down to the wild cliffs and the terrible devastation of the desert. There were no restraining walls, and the sheep would wander aimlessly munching grass. The shepherd was personally responsible for the sheep. If a sheep was lost the shepherd must at least bring home the fleece to show how it had died. The shepherds were experts at tracking and could follow the straying sheep's footprints for miles across the hills.

There was not a shepherd for whom it was not all in the day's work to lay down his life for his sheep." Some of the most profound, some of the most triumphant; yea, some of the most exhilarating words of any parable are these words; "until he find it." Our Lord, the Great Shepherd, at the cost of His own life and now through the ministry of the blessed Holy Spirit, is seeking the lost. He will find no rest until they are found.

The True Shepherd

1. He has a shepherd's heart – A pulse that throbs o'er his whole flock. "I am the Good Shepherd. The good Shepherd giveth his life for the sheep" (John 10:11).

2. He has the shepherd's feet – 'He leadeth me' "When He putteth forth His own sheep He goeth before them" (John 10:4). He will never send us without first going before us.

3. He has a shepherd's eye – His eyes are upon the whole flock. "If He lose one of them" He misses it and goeth after it "until He find it" (Luke 15:4).

4. He has a shepherd's arm – "When He hath found it, He layeth it on His shoulders, rejoicing" (Luke 15:5). "He shall feed His flock like a shepherd: He shall gather the lambs with His arm, and

carry them in His bosom" (Isaiah 40:11).

5. He has a shepherd's care – "I lay down my life for the sheep" (John 10:15). "The hireling fleeth, because he is an hireling, and careth not for the sheep" (John 10:13).

6. He has a shepherd's knowledge – "I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine." He is well acquainted with all the concerns us.

7. He has a shepherd's strength – David remembered how God helped him as he kept his father's flock. When a lion and a bear each came and took a lamb he delivered the lamb from their mouths. (I Sam. 17:34-37)

When the lion rose against him he took the lion by the beard and slew him. He trusted the God who delivered him from the paw of a lion and the paw of a bear. Our Divine Shepherd was his source of courage and strength. He declares in Isaiah 41:10 "Fear thou not; for am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God, I will strengthen thee; yea I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness."

8. He has a shepherd's voice – "To him the porter openeth and the sheep hear his voice; and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out" (John 10:3). "And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers." There is no voice that is so dear to us as the voice of our Shepherd. Sweeter lips never spoke than the lips of our Shepherd. How precious is it when He calls our name. "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them and they follow me" (John 10:37).

9. He has a shepherd's faithfulness – He hath said, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee: (Heb. 13:5).

10. He has a shepherd's ears – "I am the good Shepherd, and I know my sheep, and am known of mine" (John 10:14). Several mothers can be in a crowd with their children all playing in a group. When one is hurt and screams out, the right mother detects the voice of her child. Our Great Shepherd knows the voice of all His sheep – a comfort when you cry out in prayer.

11. He has a shepherd's tenderness – Carrying the lambs in His arms "and shall gently lead those that are with young" (Isaiah 40:11). In upholding His people (Deuteronomy 33:27) "the eternal God is Thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms."

12. He has a shepherd's fold – And there shall be one fold and shepherd" (John 10:16). Jesus declares, "I am the door: by me if man enter in, he shall be saved."

- A Sermon -

Scripture: Isaiah 53:1-9

Text: Isaiah 53:6. "All we Subject: Like Sheep

Subject: Like Sheep..

Introduction:

We like to be likened to the:

A. Owl – Wise

- B. Bee – Busy
- C. Horse – Strong and sensible
- D. Beaver – Industrious
- E. Deer – Surefooted, cautious and alert
- F. Kitten – Cute and cuddly

He likened us to one of the most ignorant of His animal creations, the silly sheep.

We wander:

I. Like sheep without regard to thought. The grass is good, the pasture is large, and there are no restraints.

II. Like sheep without regard to territory. The lion prowls for food, the hart searches for water while the sheep aimlessly climb the mountain and move into areas of danger.

III. Like sheep without regard to tragedy. The foes of the poor, innocent sheep are many.

IV. Like sheep without regard to time. Forget the coming shades of evening. Hear them in the distance bleating for the abandoned flock.

V. Like sheep without regard to tempest. The storm can build up, move in and catch them far from home and the sheepfold.

VI. Like sheep without regard to trust. Sheep are very helpless, they need the shepherd. Lambing time – mother ewe will give birth to one lamb and many times go off and leave it; Bare two and leave one. They .are good mothers but need the shepherd.

Conclusion:

Little boy at school, asked the teacher "How many sheep would there be in a pen of twenty-six if three jumped out?" Teacher replied, "Twenty-three." Little boy, "Teacher you may know arithmetic, but you don't know sheep."

The Lost Sheep

This is Christ's first of three parables on the subject of being lost. It is most applicable in comparing man to a sheep, He who became the Lamb of God.

I. The Shepherd – "What man of you." One who owns and cares for His sheep.

II. The Sheep – "If he has a hundred sheep." (See Amplified version). In some Eastern lands, they name all their sheep like we do our dogs.

III. The Stray – "And shall lose one of them." It may have been a wee lamb. It could have been a real old ewe. It could have been a young self-determined ram.

IV. The Separation – "Doth not leave the ninety and nine." What a decision – leaving those whom He has under His care.

V. The Snares – "In the wilderness." These are not yet safe in the fold, but are left to the hazards of the wilderness. He jeopardizes the whole flock because of His love for the stray.

VI. The Search – "And go after that which is lost. No words are given here to tell how he was lost.

VII. The Satisfaction – "Til. He find it." Note: he never gave up until he had found it. What a loving shepherd.

- A. The recovery – "and when he hath found it."
- B. The return – "He layeth it on his shoulder."
- C. The rejoicing – "He layeth it on His shoulder rejoicing."

Conclusion:

- A. "Joy shall be in heaven." number--all of heaven.
- B. "One sinner." The smallest possible.

Throughout this book I have given a number of outlines. I would like to give one more and fill in the outline with some thoughts of inspiration.

The Loving Shepherd and the lost sheep

Scripture: Luke 15:1-7

Text: "I am the good shepherd. The good Shepherd giveth his life for the sheep" (Jn 10:11).

"I am the good shepherd and know my sheep, and am known of mine" (John 10:14)

"The Lord is my shepherd. I shall not want" (Psalm 23:1)

"What man of you having an hundred sheep. . . " (Luke 15:4)

I. The Loving Shepherd

- A. See him as the gracious Shepherd leading His sheep.
- B. See Him as the Good Shepherd. John gives five ways He shows himself as the Good Shepherd.

1. He looks upon His sheep. (Look of recognition) "Calleth His own sheep by name" (Vs. 11). "I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep and am known of mine" (vs. 14).

2. He leads His sheep. "He . . . leadeth them out" (vs. 8). "And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them" (vs.4). He goes before.

a. In our grief – "Surely He hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows."

b. To the grave – "Became the first fruits of them that slept."

c. To glory – "I go to prepare a place for you." He will never send us where he will not go with us. "Go ye." "Lo, I am with you alway."

3. He listens to His sheep. He listens and He hears – "they know His voice" (vs. 4). "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me" (vs. 27).

4. He loves his sheep. Note text vs. 11, 14. Outline Psalm 23.

5. He longs for His sheep. "And 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" (vs. 16). This is certainly a missionary text.

C. See him as the Great Shepherd. "For ye are as sheep going astray but are now returned to the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls" (I Peter 2:25). "And when the Chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away (I Peter 5:4). "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned everyone to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all" (Isaiah 53:6).

II. The Lost Sheep

Poem – "Twas A Sheep Not a Lamb". The scripture does not say it was a lamb. It refers to the 100 sheep. It might have been a wee lamb. It could have been a ewe, or it might have been a ram. It might have been an old feeble sheep. They are all precious to the shepherd. It was lost.

A. It might have failed to follow.

B. It may have become frightened.

C. It may have fallen.

Sheep can be in the sight of the fold and still be unable to find their way home. They need the shepherd. A mother sheep may bear twin lambs and walk away and leave one or both. The shepherd must give them a sight and smell of their own and they make good mothers. I have seen them put a rope across the doorway, and sometimes a stick. As the sheep enter the corral, they jump the object in the gateway. When the shepherd removes it, the others, coming behind, keep jumping at the same spot. Well do I remember a three, decker semi-truckload of sheep being transported to new pasture. A slat was broken on the top deck: I saw a sheep's head appear in the opening. I wondered if it would try to jump out. Unmindful of danger, it made the leap to death.

A second sheep and a third and a fourth followed the first, all Leaping to their death. By the time I got the driver's attention and he got the truck stopped, sheep were scattered for blocks along the

highway. Sheep are dumb creatures and they need a shepherd. "All we like sheep have gone astray," writes the prophet. We, too need a Shepherd. Thank God we have One, our blessed Lord.

In Luke's parable we see a graphic picture of the loving Shepherd with his heart yearning for that one lost sheep. Ninety and nine were not enough; it must be a hundredfold.

Quickly the compassionate shepherd left the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and away he went in search of the lost sheep until he found it. He scaled the mountains with many a weary step. He compassed the valleys with their discouragements. We see him climbing the rocky steeps and fording torrents as they rush to find their level. Lost sheep are not easily found; but after overcoming many obstacles and rising above numerous difficulties, at last, over the rocky precipice, behind the shivering bluff, he beheld the woolly fleece. Then, with a joyful approach, he roused the weary feet, but found the sheep too weak to travel to its home; so he placed it on his shoulder and carried it back to the fold.

Sheep, unlike any other animal, never find their way home once they are lost. The cow, the horse, the dog, the cat and the pigeon will generally recover themselves when lost; and some of these seem never to become lost; but the sheep, like the sinner, generally to be sought and found.

One sheep lost out of a hundred was the smallest possible number that could be mentioned; so Christ would have died Just the same, if there had not been more than one lost sinner in the human family in any generation of the period called time. The shepherd might have said, "I must first take care of the ninety nine I have, the risk would be too great to leave such a herd, to take chances on finding one that is lost and perhaps dead,." But, no, the shepherd's compassion would not allow this. He no doubt asked the neighboring shepherds to keep an eye on the ninety-nine in his absence.

The Ninety and Nine

There were ninety and nine that safely lay
In the shelter of the fold;
But one was out on the hills away
Far, off from the gates of gold;
Away on the mountains, wild and bare,
Away from the tender shepherd's care.

Lord, Thou hast here Thy ninety and nine,
Are they not enough for Thee?
But the shepherd made answer.
This of mine Has wandered away from me;
And although the road be rough and steep,
I go to the desert to find my sheep.

Lord, whence are those blood drops all the way
That mark out the mountain track
They were shed for one who had gone astray,
Ere the shepherd could bring him back;
Lord, whence are thy hands so rent and torn
They are pierced tonight, by many a thorn.

But all through the mountains, thunder riven,
And up from the rocky steep,
There rose a cry to the gate of heaven,
Rejoice, I have found my sheep!
And the angels echoed around the throne,
Rejoice, for the Lord brings back his own!

The Ninety and Nine

('Nother Version)

Po' Lil' black sheep, dat strayed away
Done los' in de win' and de rain—
An' de Shepherd, He say: "O hirelin',
Go fin' my sheep again."
But de hirelin' say: "O Shepherd,
Dat sheep am black an' bad."
But de Shepherd, He smile, like dat
Lil' black sheep wuz do onliest lamb He had.

An' He says: "O hirelin', hasten.
For de win' an' de rain am col',
An' dat lil' black sheep am lonesome,
Out dal so far f'om de fol',"
But de hirelin; frown: "O Shepherd,
Dat sheep am of an' grey."
But de Shepherd, He smile, like dat
Lil' black sheep was fair as de break

An' He say: "O hirelin', hasten,
Lo, here am de ninety and nine,
But da, way off from de sheep-fol',
Is dat lil' black sheep o' mine."
An' de hirelin' frown: "Oh Shepherd,
De res' ob de sheep am here."
But de Shepherd, He smile, like dat
Lil' black sheep He hol' it de mostes' dear.

An' de Shepherd go, out in de darkness,
Where de night was col' an' bleak;
An' dat lil' black sheep, He fin' it,
An' lays it agains' His cheek.
An' de hirelin' frown: "O Shepherd,
Don't bring dat sheep to me."
But de Shepherd He smile, and
He hol' it An' dat lil' black sheep – wuz – me.

– Author Unknown

III. The Long Search

A. Perils of the wilderness. Heavy thicket; wild beasts.

B. Perils of the weather. Jesus related the parable of John the 10th chapter about the sheep just preceding "the feast of the dedication and it was winter."

C. Perils of the walk. It would be evening when the sheep were put into the fold for the night. This would suggest that the shepherd would be going out into the wilderness at night to search for the sheep.

My Indian friends from the Southwest know this story well. It is in the evening when they bring their sheep to their humble folds. They know their sheep. They are not just numbers to them. It may be the tiny ewe mother; it may be the young ram with the brown leg or the lamb with a black ear. That sheep must be found. They go out into the desert to find it. It may take them late into the night as they seek their lost sheep.

I recently read about a shepherd who hunted a lost sheep. He walked out into the dark and through the thicket. His flesh was torn by the thorns. He would walk and then bleat like a sheep. He would stop and listen, He would walk on feeling his way through the dark. He would bleat and then listen. After a long search he was rewarded with the response of a faint bleating in return. By following that first answer, he found his sheep that had strayed and lost its way. What a happy shepherd he was as through the dark he returned with the sheep. How beautifully this illustrates the story in Luke's parable of the Lost Sheep. We would do well to remember the parable was relayed by our Lord. I believe with all my heart that if I were the only one that had gone astray, He would have gone to Calvary for me. I believe He would have gone for every son or daughter of Adam's race. This is confirmed in the expression, "Go after that which is lost, until he find it."

The CHRISTIAN HERALD beautifully tells of a confederate soldier, who, like a lost sheep, was found.

When Sankey Sang "The Shepherd Song"

The memory of Moody and Sankey is still fragrant. Dwight L. Moody was a man to whom God had given wonderful power and ability to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ. Ira D. Sankey was another man to whom God had given wonderful power to sing the same gospel. For years these two men worked together, Moody preaching and Sankey singing. In the year 1875 they had both been at Liverpool, serving their Master in that great city. Toward the end of the year they returned to America.

It happened that on Christmas Eve of that year, 1875, Mr. Sankey was traveling by steamboat up the Delaware River. It was a calm, starlight evening, and there were many passengers gathered on the deck. Mr. Sankey was asked to sing, and as always, he was perfectly willing to do so. He stood there leaning against one of the great funnels of the boat and his eyes were raised to the starry heavens in quiet prayer. It was his intention to sing a Christmas song, but somehow he was driven almost against his will to sing the . . .

"Shepherd Song"

"Savior, like a shepherd lead us,
Must we need Thy tend'rest care;
In Thy pleasant pastures feed us,
For our use Thy folds prepare;
Blessed Jesus,
Thou hast bought us, Thine we are.

"We are Thine, do Thou befriend us,
Be the Guardian of our way;
Keep Thy flock, from sin defend us,
Seek us when we go astray:
Blessed Jesus,
Hear, oh, hear us when we pray.

"Thou hast promised to receive us,
Poor and sinful though we be;
Thou has mercy to relieve us,
Grace to cleansed, and power to free;
Blessed Jesus,
We will early turn to Thee.

"Early let us seek Thy favor,
Early let us do Thy will;
Blessed Lord and only Savior,
With Thy love our bosoms fill;
Blessed Jesus,
Thou hast loved us, love us still."

There was a deep stillness. Words and melody, welling forth from the singer's soul, floated out over the deck and the quiet river. Every heart was touched. After the song was ended, a man with a rough, weather-beaten face came up to Mr. Sankey and said;

"Did you ever serve in the Union army?"

"Yes," answered Mr. Sankey, in the spring of 1860."

"Can you remember if you were doing picket duty on a bright, moonlight night in 1862?"

"Yes ," answered Mr Sankey, very much surprised.

"So do I," said the stranger, "but I was serving in the Confederate army. When I saw you standing at your post I thought to myself: 'That fellow will never get away from here alive.' I raised my musket and took aim. I was standing in the shadow completely concealed, while the full light of the moon was falling upon you. At that instance, just as a moment ago, you raised your eyes to heaven and began to sing. Music, especially song, has always had a wonderful power over me, and I took my finger off the trigger.

"Let him sing his song to the end', I said to myself, 'I can shoot him afterwards. He's my victim at all events, and my bullet can not miss him.'

"But the song you sang then was the song you sang just now. I heard the words perfectly;

"We are Thine, do Thou befriend us, Be the guardian of our way.'

"Those words stirred up many memories in my heart. I began to think of my childhood and my God-fearing mother. She had many, many times sung that song to me. But she died all too soon; otherwise much in my life would no doubt have been different.

"When you had finished your song, it was impossible for me to take aim at you again. I thought: 'The Lord who is able to save that man from certain death must surely be great and mighty'— and my arm of its own accord dropped limp at my side.

"Since that time I have wandered about far and wide; but when I just now saw you standing there praying just as on that other occasion I recognized you. Then my heart was wounded by your song; now I wish you may help me find a cure for my sick soul."

Deeply moved, Mr. Sankey threw his arms about the man who in the days of the war had been his enemy. And that Christmas night the two went together to the manger in Bethlehem. There the stranger found Him who was their Savior the Good Shepherd, who seeks for the lost sheep until He finds it. And when He has found it, He lays it on His shoulders, rejoicing.

IV. The Laden Shoulder

"And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulder, rejoicing. And when he cometh home, he calleth together his friends and neighbors saying unto them, Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost" (Luke 15:5,6).

Again from the pen of Barclay we read:

"There is no better loved picture of Jesus than the picture of Him as the Good Shepherd. The picture of the shepherd is deeply woven into the language and the imagery of the Bible. It could not be otherwise. The main part of Judea is a central plateau. It stretches from Bethel to Hebron for a distance of about 35 miles. It varies from 14 to 17 miles across. The ground, for the most part, is rough and stony. Judea was, therefore, naturally much more a pastoral than an agricultural country. It was, therefore, inevitable that the most familiar figure of the Judean uplands was the shepherd.

The life of the Palestinian shepherd was very hard. In Palestine no flock ever grazes without a shepherd, and the shepherd is never off duty. There is little grass, and the sheep are bound to wander far afield. There are no protecting walls, and the sheep have ever to be watched. On either side of the narrow plateau the ground dips sharply down to the craggy deserts and the sheep are always liable to wander away and to get lost.

The shepherd's task was constant and dangerous, for, in addition, he had to guard the flock against wild animals, especially against wolves, and there were ever thieves and robbers ready to steal the sheep. Sir George Adam Smith, who traveled in Palestine, writes: 'On some high moor, across which at night the hyenas howl, when you meet him sleepless, far-sighted,

weather-beaten, leaning on his staff, and looking out over his scattered sheep, every one of them on his heart, you understand why the shepherd of Judea sprang to the front in his people's history; why they gave his name to their king, and made him the symbol of providence; why Christ took him as the type of self-sacrifice." Constant vigilance, fearless courage, patient love for his flock, were the necessary characteristics of the shepherd."

A Touching Moment

Many years ago I visited Boys' Town, near Omaha, Nebraska. A monument of two small boys caught my eye. The monument pictured one small boy in the arms of his brother who was just a little larger than he. As nearly as I can remember the story behind it is as follows: These two lads set out for boys' Town, seeking a home. They got very tired along the way. Finally the younger one gave out and sat down to cry. His brother coaxed him to try again. After several efforts of coaxing him on and after they had walked perhaps many miles, they nearly reached the Boys' Home. The little brother finally gave up. His brother gathered him in his arms and trudged on. Fortunately they had nearly made it before the youngest one gave out and wept himself to sleep in his brother's arms.

Father Flanagan, in greeting the boy with his precious bundle said, "You've got quite a load haven't you?" The brother's reply was very touching and was placed upon the monument. "He ain't hebbly 'cause he's my brother."

These words remind me of the Loving Shepherd. "And when he hath found it he layeth it on his shoulders rejoicing."

The Lost Girl Found

One of the most touching incident that I ever read centered around a man who left the city, walking along a country road. The road was narrow, winding and mountainous. It was a poorly marked dirt road. The man set out in the late evening and had not traveled far until he realized he was soon to be caught in a cold sleet storm. He turned around to go back to the city when he felt strongly, he must go home. He again turned about to face the cold drizzle on that dark night. He slipped and struggled for footing as he walked along. He stopped to catch his breath when he heard a strange sound. He listened and could detect the voice of a little child weeping.

He left the trail and followed the sound. As he felt in the dark, he found a little girl who was weeping in frightened terror. He laid her on his strong shoulder and made it back to the slippery road. The night was dark, and the storm was still raging. He felt it best to take her to his own home and find her home and parents on the morrow. When he finally opened his door, he saw his wife with weeping, terrified eyes. He looked down. The little lass he had found was his own little daughter. What a precious bundle she became on his shoulder. May I add that in a much dearer fashion the Shepherd of men rejoices to welcome the lost sinner to his bosom and carry him into the presence of His Father and into the Great Shepherd's fold.

The Bleating of an Indian Lad

When serving on a children's home board a number of years ago, I was attracted to a little Indian lad who was sobbing at the altar. Several of the children were praying. This little lad cupped his hands to his mouth and called out in bleating fashion "Baa – baa – baa." He would put his head down and weep some more, and then lift his head again and sobbingly say, "baa – baa – baa."

Finally he said after bleating, "It's me, Cardell. Can't you hear me Lord? I'm that lost sheep." He then folded his hands sweetly and exclaimed "Oh, I am found. The Shepherd found me. Jesus, it's so good to be on your shoulder again. I'm on my way home." What a happy little Indian lad he was. What a true picture. This is the way our gentle Shepherd wishes to welcome every sinner on his strong, loving shoulder and into his fold.

V. The Likewise Sinner

"I say unto you that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance" (Luke 15:7).

Let me use my imagination to describe a possible scene in heaven when a soul gets saved. Joy in heaven. God would say, "Gabriel, play your trumpet, lead the glory band of heaven. David, play your harp, lead the Hallelujah orchestra. Michael, the Archangel, lead the angels in chant of Holy, Holy, Holy." The Cherubim and seraphim and myriads of angels all join in.

"Paul and Silas, remember how you sang at midnight and I joined in, lead the heavenly chorus while the redeemed of all ages sing and clap their hands." Lame man from the Gate Beautiful, leap and shout again. Another sinner has been found and is back in the fold again."

"Likewise I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth" (Luke 15:10).

Language cannot describe the occasion of the conversion of one sinner.

It is such a joy to know that the Lord, as our Savior, can convert our souls and save us from sin. It is a glorious experience to be cleansed of our carnal sin and purified by the precious blood of Jesus. These are the initial experiences to prepare us for a Christian life. Beyond these there is that wonderful experience of knowing the Lord as our Shepherd, to lead us in daily communion with Him. He is our Savior, our Sanctifier, and our Shepherd.

CONCLUSION

The Shepherd's Promise and the Glorified Saints

The Lost Lamb

I am a Navajo lassie
And I am sad today.
It is not even fun to ride-
They took my lamb away.

My father gave the lamb to me
When it was born last spring;
But the medicine man has taken
To pay him for a "sing."

My sister was so sick – she made
A picture in the sand
To cure her, and the people came
To eat the feast we'd planned.

It cost us many sheep, and yet
My sister after all
Is worse, and says she wishes for
The Christian hospital.

She cries and says that she is sure
The Jesus Way is good.
I do not understand it quite,
But, oh, I wish I could.

Old horse, I wonder if you know
How very sad I am-
My sister still is sick, and I
Am lonesome for my lamb.
– Edith Agnew

Saints, we are nearing the return of the Great Shepherd. The mission fields of earth are beckoning. To assure our readiness, let's be diligent to share the good news of His coming and find the lost sheep, those precious souls who do not know the way to heaven.

WHERE ARE THE LAMBS?

The Master was carefully counting His sheep,
As they were enfolded for ensheltered sleep.
Each one He greeted with passionate voice
You'd think that each one was His dearest choice.
A lame one He halted and lovingly stroked;
Anointed and splinted the leg which was broke.

Another, bewildered had been worried by beasts;
He tenderly stroked him till all his fears ceased.
Again one grey-muzzled, well stricken by time,
Was tenderly fondled and placed back in line.
Not one was slighted, though well or lame,
He carefully scanned them again and again.

Then choked with emotion in faltering voice,
He asked sheep and shepherds, eyes full and moist,
Where are the lambs I asked you to bear?
I love you all dearly but the little lambs, too,
Are mine by redemption, I left them to you.

Why did you not hasten to bear fruit for me,
And care for the lambs as I cared for thee?
I sought and bought you on Mount Calvary;
Up, up the steep mountain, none went with me.
Up Golgotha's mountain of pain and distress,
On, on through the darkness till I at the crest.

Transfixed by death's arrow, then bore you away;
With my own blood ebbing, I saved you that day.
Carest not for the other sheep I must bring?
Does not my compassion in your heart, too, spring?
Your duty is bearing – fulfilling my plans,
Oh, my heart is saddened, I must have the lambs.
– Author Unknown

The Shepherd's Promise and the Glorified Saints

"Fear not little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom" (Luke 13:32).

The Shepherd Cometh

Thy sheep, dear Shepherd, long for rest
Within the sheltering fold.
Without, the storms rage east and west.
And winds blow fierce and cold.

Come, Shepherd, come, they cry to Thee,
The gate unlock, unbar,
And let Thy flock warm sheltered be
From gales that drive afar.

Delay Thou not, Thou Shepherd dear,
Lest wolves Thy lambs o'ertake.
Their howlings sound the fold anear.
Open now for Thy dear sake.

"I surely come," the Shepherd's voice
Is heard o'er hill and fen.
"Stand fast, My flock. Rejoice! Rejoice!
I surely come again.

"But in the hours that intervene,
My sheep, full faithful be.
Let nothing come our hearts between.
Be firmly stayed in me."

Oh, weary heart that acheth so,
Soon, soon shalt thou be blest
With safety from thine every foe
Within the fold of rest!

The hope of the Church is for the return of the Shepherd King. Good news, dear Christian friend, His coming is near. He said, "Occupy till I come." We have much to do to get our loved ones and friends in. I am finishing this book while Mrs. Gale and I are planning another trip to the Philippines. Fields are "white unto harvest." "Sheep scattered without a shepherd." Part of our preparation for His coming is being busy in His harvest and in seeking His lost sheep.

The Ninety and Nine

There were ninety and nine
That safely lay in the shelter of the fold,
No love for souls, no burden to pray
Their first love had grown cold.
How often we sing of the one lost sheep,
But where are the ninety and nine
Their pastor can search for members o'er,
But true workers are hard to find.

They once were at earnest, on fire for God,
Backing their pastor in prayer;
But now when he needs them on prayer meeting nights
In church they are seldom there.
The weather is too hot or the nights are too cold,
Or they have heard the sermon before,
And so the chances to win a poor lost
soul are gone forevermore.

The ninety and nine now safely lay
In the ease of the old rocking chair,
They're tired so they just relax and
enjoy the Church of the Air.
They have worked so hard all week through
Dashing madly about
That now when Sunday rolls around
They are simply tuckered out.
They go and they come,
They buy and they sell,
They eat and they drink and they sleep;
They can search for the almighty dollar,
But not for the poor lost sheep.

And the pastor cannot search for the lost sheep,
Because of the ninety and nine,
He must coddle them and pet them
And never neglect them
Or else they will whimper and whine.
Time is so short for such trifling things,
Let us hear the cry of the lost,
Pray for your pastor whatever you do
Back him at any cost.
We who are part of the ninety and nine
Let us rise up out of our sleep,
And search through the night
With all our might
For the poor lost wandering sheep.
Author Unknown

I close this little volume with an appeal through the:

Paraphrase of the Twenty-Third Psalm

By William Harvey Coats

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want another. Oh, make me not to lie down in green pastures until I've helped harvest the fields of white. Lead me not beside the still waters until I've rescued some sinful soul from the raging sea. Restore my soul from hour to hour and lead me in the paths of righteousness, so I may show 'tis done for Thy name's sake. Yea, make me to walk through the valley of the shadow of death, that I may rescue some dying soul. Make me to fear the evil of work undone. Be thou with me in all I say and do. Let not thy rod and staff comfort me until they have been held out to some sinful stranger. Prepare no table before me until I have bound up the wounds of the sick and dying. Let my cup run over with the over-blessings that have been poured into the cups of others. Teach me to share the goodness and mercy follow me all the days of my life. And I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever, with the redeemed I have brought to Thee.