

July 9

When He putteth forth His own sheep, He goeth before them, and the sheep follow Him: for they know His voice. John 10:4

THE voice of the Good Shepherd is a blending of various sounds in a manner in which they are blended by no other voice. His voice sounds forth the chord of justice

THE SHEEP KNOW HIS VOICE

R2441 "Travelers tell us that the peculiarities of this parable are fully illustrated in eastern countries, even to this day; that a shepherd will know every individual sheep in his flock, and have a name for it, and that the sheep know their shepherd, and discern readily the sound of his voice, and cannot be deceived..."

Our Lord used these facts, well known to his hearers, to illustrate his relationship to the Lord's people, as their Shepherd, the Son of the Great Shepherd; and he pointed out that all who were truly of his flock would hear his voice, would not be deceived by the Adversary, tho he should disguise himself in garments of light, to deceive, if it were possible, the very elect. The important thing, then, is that we should become true members of the Lord's flock, intimately acquainted with him, and familiar with his word, his voice."

R1950 "The true children of God love the truth because they have an affinity for it. They love righteousness, they love their fellow men, and desire to bless and help them. They have large benevolence and brotherly kindness. They are meek, too, and not anxious to make a show of self and to glory over their fellows in argument; nor are they mere curiosity-hunters. When they have found the truth they recognize its value; they prize it and meditate upon it; they view it as a grand and systematic embodiment of the highest ideal of righteousness, love and benevolence. They rejoice not only in its gracious provisions for the elect joint-heirs with Christ, but also for all mankind, as well as in the merciful dealings of God with the finally incorrigibly wicked whom he will mercifully destroy, but not torment. They say, It is just like God: it is the manifestation of his glorious goodness, the reflection of his loving, benevolent, wise and just character. And therefore they love the truth and the God who gave it: they treasure it up in their hearts and con it over again and again; and as they look into it, and admire all its symmetry and beauty, they strive more and more to conform their own characters to the same lines of beauty and seek to commend it by word and conduct to others, that they also may be blessed by it.

This is what it is to receive the truth into good and honest hearts. For such the truth was intended; and it is not possible for them to be deceived by the sophistries of error. They know a good thing when they have it, and therefore hold it fast. They cling to it just as steel filings cling to a magnet, because they have an affinity for it. If you run a magnet through a box of sawdust and steel filings it will come out covered with the steel filings. A little sawdust may rest lightly on it, too, just as some people associate themselves with the truth and with those who hold it very dear; but the sawdust is easily blown off, while the steel filings hold fast...

Belief of the truth will avail nothing if

commingled with the chord of love, and the whole intoned with wisdom and with power. Other theories, plans and schemes of men and devils have no such harmony of sound as has the message which the Great Shepherd has sent us through His Son. Moreover when the true sheep hear the voice of the Good Shepherd, it satisfies their

it be not permitted to produce its legitimate fruit in a good and honest heart--viz., sanctification of the spirit, a complete setting apart to the divine will and service. Let us lay this lesson well to heart, and so run as to obtain the prize of our high calling. "Buy the truth" at any cost of self-sacrifice, "and sell it not" for any paltry present advantage."

THE HIRELING FLEETH

R4158 "Only the true Shepherd was willing to make the sacrifice and to lay down his life for the sheep. We may remark here that while there is but one Shepherd of the Lord's flock, he, in his absence, has made provision for his flock, that he would give them pastors and teachers who were to feed the flock of God and to watch for their souls, for their lives, to protect their interests.

It is in line with the Master's teaching that we find that he expects all who would be worthy of this position of feeding this flock, shepherding them, must have his spirit, his willingness to lay down their lives for the sheep, and in their defense, as his representatives, to protect them from the Adversary and his various snares and machinations and from the wolves in sheep's clothing who would make merchandise of them that they might bring them into bondage, into human pens separate and apart from the true fold opened by the true Shepherd and who would feed them upon the husks of human tradition, instead of leading them to the green pastures of "Present Truth"... Those who utter a voice or call of their own cannot be recognized by the true Shepherd or by the true sheep..."

How important from the divine standpoint is knowledge, not merely head knowledge, but heart knowledge, intimate acquaintance with the Lord and his glorious plan!"

F247-249 "It seems less remarkable that "goats" and goat-like sheep in the Lord's flock should aspire to leadership, than that the true sheep who recognize the Master's voice, who know his Spirit and who are seeking to do his will, should with docility permit such goats or goat-like sheep to take the leadership amongst them. It is well that we follow peace with all men; but where we disregard the Word and Spirit of the Lord for the sake of peace it will be sure to result injuriously to a greater or less extent. It is well that all should have the docile, sheep-like nature; but it is necessary also that the sheep have *character*, else they cannot be overcomers; and if they have character they should remember the Chief Shepherd's words, "My sheep hear my voice [obey it]...and they follow me," "a *stranger* will they not follow...for they know not the voice of strangers." (John 10:5,27) It is the duty, therefore, of every sheep to take special notice of the message and the manner of every brother before they aid in putting him forward as an overseer, either local or general. They should first be convinced that he

longings as nothing else could do. They will no longer be in danger of being attracted by other sounds, or voices, theories or schemes, but will reply to all.

"Jesus has satisfied; Jesus is mine."
Z.'00-230R2672:5

has the real qualifications of an elder in the Church--that he is sound on the basic doctrines of the Gospel--the atonement, redemption through the precious blood of Christ, and full consecration to him, his message, his brethren, his service. They should have charity and sympathy for the weakest of the lambs and for all the mentally and morally lame sheep; but they [F248] would be doing violence to the divine arrangement to choose such for their leaders or elders. They should have no sympathy with goats, or with wolves in sheep's clothing who strive for place and authority in the Church.

It should be recognized that the *Ecclesia* is far better off without any public servant than to have for a leader a golden-tongued "goat," who would surely not "direct their hearts into the love of God," but seductively into wrong channels. Of such our Lord forewarned the Church; such the Apostle described, saying, "Of yourselves shall men arise speaking perverse things [wrong, misleading doctrines], to draw away disciples after them [to artfully attract followers after themselves]." The Apostle says that many shall follow their pernicious ways, by reason of whom the Truth will be evil spoken of. Acts 20:30; 2 Pet. 2:2

So we see it today. Many are preaching themselves rather than preaching the Gospel, the good tidings of the Kingdom; they are attracting disciples after themselves and their denominations, rather than attracting them to and uniting them only with the Lord, as members of his body. They are seeking to be the heads of churches, instead of having all the members of the body look directly to the Lord as the Head. From all such we should turn away... The true sheep must not only be careful to recognize the voice of the true Shepherd and to follow him, but they must remember also not to follow, not to support, not to encourage those who are self-seeking. Every one esteemed worthy of confidence in the Church as an Elder, should be sufficiently well known in advance to justify such confidence; hence, the Apostle says, "not a novice." A novice might do the Church injury and might himself be injured also, by being puffed up, and thus be led away from the Lord [F249] and the proper spirit and the narrow path toward the Kingdom.

The Apostle Paul* gives very explicit advice concerning who might properly be recognized by the Church as elders -- describing in detail what should be their character, etc. In his letter to Timothy on this subject (1 Tim. 3:1-7) he reiterates the same in slightly different language. In addressing Titus, who evidently was another general overseer (Tit. 1:5-11), he describes their duties toward the Church. The Apostle Peter on the subject says, "The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an Elder,...Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight there--

* 1 Tim. 3:2; 5:17; 1 Thess. 5:12; Jas. 5:14

of...not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock." 1 Pet. 5:1-3

They should be generous men, men of pure lives, having no more than one wife; and if they have children it should be noticed to what extent the parent has exercised a wholesome influence in his own family--for it should reasonably be judged that if he has been derelict in his duty toward his children, he probably would be unwise or derelict in his counsels and his general ministries amongst the Lord's children in the Ecclesia, the Church. He is not to be double-tongued or deceptive, not to be a brawler or a contentious person. He should be one of good reputation amongst those outside the Church: not that the world will ever love or rightly appreciate the saints, but that the world should, at least, be unable to point to anything derogatory to their character as respects honesty, uprightness, morality, truthfulness. There is no limitation made respecting the number of elders in a Church or Ecclesia.

In addition to the foregoing limitations, it is required that an Elder shall be "apt to teach"; that is to say, he must have ability as a teacher, explainer, expounder of the divine plan, and thus to be able to assist the Lord's flock in word and in doctrine. It is not essential to eldership that the talent [F250] or qualifications of a "prophet" or public speaker be possessed; there may be found several in the same Church possessing teaching abilities and pastoral and other qualifications of an Elder, and yet possibly none possessing the qualifications of a public speaker or declaimer of the divine plan. The Lord should be trusted to raise up such servants as are needful, and if none are supplied the need may be doubted. We might here remark that some of the most prosperous Ecclesias, gatherings or congregations are those in which there is no great talent for public speaking, and in which, consequently, Bible studies are the rule rather than the exception. The Scriptures clearly show that this was a custom in the early Church, too; and that when they came together an opportunity was offered for the exercise of the various talents possessed by the various members of the body--one to speak, others to pray, many, if not all, to sing. Experience seems to show that those companies of the Lord's people which follow this rule most closely, receive the largest amount of blessing and develop the strongest characters. That which is merely heard by the ear, however well-spoken and however good, is not impressed upon the heart so thoroughly as though the individual himself exercised his mind in connection with it, as is sure to be the case in a properly conducted Bible study in which all should have encouragement to take part."

R4503 "In the selection of Elders the consecrated should remember that the responsibility rests upon them; and no vote should be cast without studious consideration of the Divine will, and prayer for Divine guidance. In seeking to determine the Lord's will in such a matter, we should remember the characteristics of the teacher as set forth in the Scriptures: (1) Of course, a teacher should be apt to teach; he should have the natural faculty or ability to make plain matters which he understands. (2) Still more

important is it that if he have the ability to teach, he shall be clear in the Truth, so the Truth and not error may be set forth with clearness. (3) Humility and piety should be considered paramount and primary qualifications for eldership. However able a teacher, however doctrinally clear, no one is properly fitted for this position except he have humility and piety, and unless his words and deeds have manifested his love for the brethren. For, as the Scriptures set forth, these are qualities of great value in God's sight. Now as ever it is true that great opportunities for doing good means even greater opportunities for doing harm. This is because, under present conditions, spiritual sickness and contagions like earthly ailments spread and "catch" much more readily than spiritual health."

R5956 "Everyone appointed to serve the Lord's people is thereby put into the place of great temptation, which might mean a spiritual fall and ruin in the Second Death. Perhaps the Lord's people have not been sufficiently considerate of these things as respects those whom they elect to be their servants. Perhaps those accepting these positions of service under the votes of the brethren scarcely realize what danger they do run in accepting. If they realized, doubtless that realization would make them hesitate about accepting at all; and humility would certainly lead them not to attempt to serve unless they were most explicitly appointed to the service.

But what do we find? Alas! in some a tendency to seek the eldership or deaconship. In some, even a tendency to "wire-pull" and bargain that they might be elected; in some a tendency to feel offended if they were not chosen; in some a tendency to feel angry with anybody who would vote against them in such an election. Alas! alas! if the dear brethren realized what was gnawing in their minds and urging them on to these things-- oh, what a different course they would take! In all meekness and humility they should feel a timidity even about taking a position where there would be such a responsibility. The admonition on this is that although all of the Church should, according to their knowledge of the Truth, be qualified to be teachers, nevertheless the safer place is not to be a teacher, knowing that such shall have the severer trial. Only a sense of responsibility to the Lord and to the brethren should make one willing to serve in such capacity, much as all ought to love to be the Lord's representatives in the Church."

R1475 "There is a deep responsibility to God which every man assumes, whether he realizes it or not, when he becomes a public teacher. "Whosoever shall break one of these least commandments, and shall *teach* men so, he shall be called the *least* in the kingdom of heaven; but whosoever *shall do* and *teach* them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven."-- Matt. 5:19.

No table is fit for the household of faith to be summoned to that has not been spread by careful hands, fully submitted and obedient to the great Head of the house, whose directions are found in his Word...

Let none of the consecrated be in haste to rush into print with crude, undefined ideas, and thus become stumbling-blocks in the way of many others. Be content to spread the truth you have received, and

proved to your thorough satisfaction, before some other hungry saints; but keep the table clean: don't make up for your deficiency of knowledge by spreading out a host of idle speculations. Better is a pure morsel from a clean table than great abundance under other conditions. By and by to this morsel another morsel will be added, and in due time the wealth of divine bounty will be realized."

(John 7:16 KJV) "Jesus answered them, and said, My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me."

(John 8:28 KJV) "Then said Jesus unto them... as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things."

(1 Pet 4:10-11 KJV) "As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. {11} If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen."

R1188 "If we would teach the truth, let us first prove it and make sure that it is truth, and not present crude ideas and human imaginations to stumble the weaker brother. And likewise in dispensing religious reading matter, we should be similarly careful to speak by this agency also as the oracles of God. No tract or book or paper should be handed to another, which we cannot endorse. Thus we may speak as the oracles of God and minister of the ability which God giveth, that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion forever and ever."

R2079 "WORSHIP THE LORD IN THE BEAUTY OF HOLINESS"...*"The hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshipers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth; for the Father seeketh such to worship him."*--John 4:23

AT the first advent our Lord said of some of the unbelieving professors of religion of the scribes and Pharisees: "In vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men."...

Many never fully escape the *fear* "taught by the precepts of men" (Isa. 29:13), and to the very last are hindered thereby from the attainment of "perfect love" and from the rendering of the highest degree of worship in spirit and in truth.

And what is true of this false doctrine is true to some extent of all false doctrines. Every error hides some truth; every misunderstanding of the character of God or of the fundamental features of his plan of salvation is so much to hinder men from becoming to the fullest extent possible worshipers of God in spirit and in truth. It is to this end that God's people are exhorted to search the Scriptures to "know the truth," to "know God," because, as our Lord declares, the object of the giving of the truth is to produce *sanctification* of heart and life, and hence whatever beclouds or hinders the truth hinders sanctification of heart...

God's people are to love and esteem each other, and that in proportion as they recognize in each other the spirit of God, the

spirit of Christ, the spirit of holiness and devotion to truth and righteousness; as the Apostle says, the faithful should be esteemed "very highly for their work's sake" (1 Thess. 5:13); but while there may be danger that some will fail to render "honor to whom honor is due" (Rom. 13:7), there is undoubtedly danger also that some might render too much honor to human instruments, whom God is pleased to use in connection with the service of the truth...

When John fell down to worship the angel who had shown him the wonders of the divine plan, the angel's refusal to accept homage should be a lesson to all ministers (servants--messengers) of God. He said, "See thou do it not; for I am thy fellow-

servant [not thy Lord and Master], and [fellow-servant] of thy brethren the prophets, and [fellow-servant] of [all] them which keep the sayings of this book. Worship God [the source from which come all these blessings and all this light]." All servants of God are fellow-servants regardless of the time or extent of their service...

There seems to be a general tendency on the part of all who have the true, humble, sheep nature to follow one another. It is a lesson, therefore, for all to learn--that each sheep recognize as leaders only such as are found in full accord with the voice and spirit of the Chief Shepherd (Christ), and the under-shepherds (the Apostles), and that each sheep see to it that he eats only "clean prov-

ender" and drinks only "pure water" as directed by the Shepherd. (See Ezek. 34:17-19.) This implies the exercise of the individual conscience of each member of Christ's flock on matters of doctrine and practice, and tends to keep each one in sympathy and fellowship with the Shepherd..."

(1 Th 5:21 KJV) "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good."

(Col 2:8 Wilson Diaglott) "Take care that no one make a prey of you through PHILOSOPHY and empty deceit, according to the TRADITION of MEN, according to the ELEMENTS of the WORLD, and not according to Christ."

R2672 (From Harvest Truth Database V5.0 2008)

THE GREAT SHEPHERD AND HIS SON, THE GOOD SHEPHERD

JOHN 10:1-16.--AUGUST 26.

"The Good Shepherd giveth his life for the sheep."

DAVID, THE PSALMIST, wrote prophetically, "Jehovah is my shepherd; I shall not want" (Psa. 23); for in David's day the arrangements for the Shepherd and the flock of this lesson had not been completed. True, the heavenly Father had purposed his entire plan as respects humanity's redemption and return to his care as his flock, but he had not yet sent his only begotten Son, the Good Shepherd, to give his life for the sheep, to call the flock, to open the door and to lead them out and into pasturage and to rest. Nevertheless, in the Lord's providence the nation of Israel had already been gathered, as those who would be prepared to be the flock of the Good Shepherd when he should come. These were "shut up under the Law" (Gal. 3:23), waiting for the coming of the Good Shepherd to open the door and to call them by name as his own sheep. Others, indeed, came before the Messiah, affecting to be the true shepherd, leaders sent of God, but they were mere pretenders, who sought their own good and glory, and not that of the sheep. They were thieves and robbers, who sought to gain possession of the sheep for their own selfish ends.

The "porter" (representing the Law) would not recognize any of these pretenders, nor approve them, nor open to them access to the sheep. But when the true Shepherd came he satisfied the Law (the porter), and bought the sheep from Justice, giving his own life as their redemption price. Thus he gained the full right to open the door, the full sanction of the porter, the full authority to lead forth the sheep to the green pastures and still waters of divine truth which then became due to them.

At the time of the giving of this parable our Lord was laying down his life, and at the same time uttering his voice, that the true sheep might learn to know him. And not only will all the true sheep learn to know the Shepherd, but, precious thought! the Shepherd knoweth his own sheep individually, so that he calleth each by name as he leads them out. This suggests to us the intimacy of the relationship between Christ and each member of his flock.

The treatment of sheep in this part of the world is very different from that described in the parable, which is still maintained in Oriental countries. Here sheep are driven, and have little or no acquaintance with the herdsmen. But in Palestine, for instance, every sheep has a personal acquaintance with its shepherd, and he with it, and it is said that this acquaintance is so particular that the shepherds have a separate name for each sheep, and know each individually by its name, and that the sheep knows its own name and will respond to a call from its own shepherd at any time. How beautifully this illustrates the close relationship between Christ and his flock, the Church! He gives to each one of us a new name, and we are each personally known to him--our peculiarities of character, temperament, etc., our strong points and our weaknesses--he knoweth them all. He loves us, cares for us, helps us over our trials and difficulties, and shields us from the temptations which would be too strong for us. "He will not suffer us to be tempted above that we are able, but will with the temptation provide also a way of escape," and causes that "all things work together for good to them that love God, the called ones according to his purpose"--his "little flock" of this Gospel age.

We note also the care of the Shepherd over the sheep, for he says, "He putteth forth his own sheep and goeth before them." The words "putteth forth" have the significance of looking after them, that they all get started in the way to the green pastures and still

waters for soul refreshment. He is not heedless, careless, respecting them, whether they go or do not go; nevertheless, having started them in the way he will not drive them: he goeth before them to lead, that they may follow. Our Good Shepherd has indeed set us a noble example, so that we may walk in his steps; and whoever will, to the extent of his ability, trustfully do this, will find his wants abundantly supplied, for "No good thing will he [the Shepherd] withhold from those who [thus] walk uprightly." "He will guide them with his counsel, and afterward receive them to glory."--Psa. 84:11; 73:24.

Our Lord's parable does not tell us about the disciplines which the sheep are sure to receive, but these are set before us in the prophetic psalm on the subject, in the words, "Thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me." The thought is that the Shepherd, while going before and not driving the sheep, nevertheless has such an interest and care that he will not suffer one of the sheep to wander away without administering certain chastisements designed for its good, and to correct it and to bring it back into fellowship in the flock. This is a comfort, and yet it should certainly be the desire of all true sheep to follow the Shepherd so closely that the rod shall not often be necessary.

The link between the Shepherd and the sheep, as here indicated, is love. The Shepherd loves the sheep, and has demonstrated this in having laid down his life for them; and the sheep speedily learn to love the Shepherd, as their care-taker; they recognize him through his voice--the Word of God. This voice appeals to the hearts of all the true sheep, who quickly respond, "Never man spake as this man."

⁽¹⁾The voice of the Good Shepherd is a blending of various sounds in a manner in which they are blended by no other voice. His voice sounds forth the chord of justice commingled with the chord of love, and the whole intoned with wisdom and with power. Other theories, plans and schemes of men and of devils, have no such harmony of sound as has the message which the great Shepherd has sent us through his Son. His voice speaks to us of a just penalty for sins--death; it speaks of love, in our redemption and the forgiveness of our sins, and the opening to us of the way of life, through resurrection. This "word of grace" constrains all the true sheep as no other message or voice could do. ⁽²⁾Moreover, when the true sheep hear the voice of the Good Shepherd, it satisfies their longings as nothing else could do. They will no longer be in danger of being attracted by other sounds or voices, theories or schemes, but will reply to all,

⁽³⁾"Jesus has satisfied; Jesus is mine."

There are many false voices in the world today, seeking to lead the Lord's sheep astray, and these are sometimes sounded in deceptive tones, to imitate the Shepherd's call, to draw away sheep after those who would be shepherds, but whom the great Shepherd has not appointed; shepherds who not only have not purchased the sheep, but who seek to ignore the great sacrifice by which the Good Shepherd did purchase them. We might mention many such false

⁽¹⁾ ½ July 9 Manna, John 10:4

⁽²⁾ ½ July 9 Manna

⁽³⁾ Hymn 116

voices, or false would-be shepherds,--Christian Science, Theosophy, Spiritism, Evolution, Higher Criticism, etc., but we have the Good Shepherd's word for it, that his true sheep will not be deceived by any of these. Well do they know his voice, and its combination of justice, love, and mercy cannot be duplicated by others,--its message of redemption by the precious blood, justification by faith, the high calling, the begetting of the holy spirit, the by-and-by deliverance of the sons of God, and eventually of all who will obey him of the entire groaning creation, through restitution.

This voice, once heard, can never be mistaken for another; and those who know this Shepherd and his voice need never be misled by others. The Lord's true sheep, whom he knows by name and who follow him, will not heed the voice of strange shepherds, but will flee from them. They know when they hear a false voice, that it means that the Adversary is seeking to ensnare them; and such will flee from the voice of error that they may come the closer to the true Shepherd, who gave his life for the sheep. If, therefore, we see some whom we had supposed were of the Lord's flock heeding another voice and following after strange shepherds, and heedless of the voice that speaketh from heaven, we need not be fearful; for if they are true sheep of the Lord's flock they cannot long be deceived, if at all. We may indeed sound out the voice of the Good Shepherd, calling their attention afresh to the harmonies and beauties of the "voice from heaven," but if still they do not hear and heed, we may know that they do not belong to the flock which our Shepherd is now collecting and shepherding.

Amongst those who heard this parable from our Lord's lips, not many comprehended, not many had the hearing ear for the true Shepherd's voice: only a small proportion of the Jewish people followed him and became his true sheep. Similarly now, many are professing to be the true sheep of the Lord's flock, but in this day of the Shepherd's presence his voice, the truth, becomes the test. All of the true sheep will hear and be attracted by the voice of truth now uttered, and will obey it. Those who are not of the Good Shepherd's flock, and who have not his spirit, he desires shall now be separated; to this end they will hear the voice of other shepherds, and be deceived thereby: because they are not truly of the Lord's flock.

Dr. Porter tells of a scene he witnessed, in which several flocks of sheep were for a time commingled, and how, when the due time was come, the separation took place. He says:--

"As we sat and looked, almost spell-bound, the silent hillsides around were in a moment filled with life and sound. Thousands of sheep and goats were there, grouped in confused masses. The shepherds stood together until all came out, and then they separated, each shepherd taking a different path, and uttering, as he advanced, a shrill, peculiar call. The sheep heard them; at first the mass swayed and moved as if shaken by some internal convulsion; then points struck out in the directions taken by the shepherds. These became longer and longer, until the confused masses were resolved in long, living streams flowing after their leaders."

So at the present time there are many sheep in the nominal Church, but they are not all the Lord's sheep. Some belong to human leaders of various sects, and some are God's. The harvest, or end of this Gospel age, the time for separating the wheat from the tares, is the time for separating the different flocks of sheep. In harmony with this, we now hear various voices calling the sheep in various directions, as never before. This is, in the Lord's providence, for the purpose of separating all others from his own "little flock." His sheep will hear his voice and follow him--other sheep, consecrated to human leaders, human institutions, human theories, human efforts, will follow their own bents, and thus be separated from the "little flock," and this is now the Lord's good pleasure. Thus he will "gather out of his kingdom all things that offend and them that do iniquity," before the glorifying of his Church and the great time of trouble that will follow.

CHRIST THE DOOR OF GOD'S SHEEP-FOLD

As a further explanation of the matter, our Lord refers to himself as the Door of the sheep-fold, the lawful, proper entrance-gate, by which God's people might enter into rest. All who had ever come previously, claiming to be messiahs, had attempted to climb up by some other way than that of keeping the divine law and purchasing the sheep. They were thieves and robbers, attempting to take what they had not secured a right to, and that for selfish gain. But none of the true sheep would heed them nor follow them. Now, however, the Good Shepherd had come, and had purchased the sheep, opening a legal door of entrance to them and liberty for them, and it was appropriate that all of the true sheep should know it. Now it had become possible for the sheep to have in Christ the liberty so long desired, and to be led out and into pasturage and refreshment and to

rest and security. Henceforth Jehovah's flock should never lack for pasturage; because, having bought them through his Son, they shall be cared for. They may now say, "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever."

Others who had approached the sheep, seeking to be their leaders, had done so selfishly; had been willing to sacrifice the sheep in their own interest; but the Good Shepherd, solicitous for the best interests of the sheep, demonstrated this by the sacrifice of his own life on their behalf, that they might have life more abundant, better than they had ever known hitherto,-- eternal life. Hireling shepherds labor for the hire, and not from personal interest in the sheep, and consequently, instead of being ready to lay down their lives for the sheep in times of extremity and persecution for righteousness' sake, they are ready rather to flee the trouble and avoid persecution. They think chiefly of their own ease and comfort, honor and dignity, and of how much of the golden fleece they can get from the sheep. They are not very deeply concerned respecting the spiritual progress of the sheep, their growth in grace, and in all the fatness of love and spiritual welfare; but specially in numbers and collections.

Perhaps never more than at present is this truth clearly illustrated amongst those who are professedly representatives of the Good Shepherd--under-shepherds in his flock. Many of them give evidence of wanting to be on the popular side of every question--of unwillingness to suffer anything for the sake of the truth; of carelessness respecting the real spiritual condition of the flock: of interest rather in the human institutions through which they obtain their support, and with whose welfare their honor, dignity and titles are associated. Of such shepherds Milton, the poet, wrote, styling them--

"...blind mouths.

The hungry sheep look up and are not fed,
But, swollen with wind and the rank mist they draw,
Rot inwardly, and foul contagion spread."

The Christian philosopher, John Ruskin, commenting upon this, says: "These two monosyllables, 'blind mouths,' express the precisely accurate contraries of the right character in the two great offices of the Church,--those of bishop and pastor. A bishop means a person who *sees*; a pastor means one who *feeds*. The most unbishoply character a man can have is, therefore, to be blind. The most unpastoral is, instead of feeding, to want to be fed,--to be a mouth."

Nevertheless, the Good Shepherd will always be represented amongst the sheep by those who have his own characteristics, and who are seeking to walk in his footsteps; and through these he will utter his "voice," and lead his own sheep to pasture and to rest. These will not only have the same voice, the same Word, the same good tidings, but they will have the same devotion to the interests of the sheep--to feed the sheep, to lead them into the green pastures and by the still waters of present truth, and to preserve their liberties in the Lord, and not to pen them up as their own, nor to make merchandise of them.

The Father, the great over-Shepherd, Jehovah, is referred to by the Good Shepherd, Jesus, in *verse 16*. "The Father knoweth me" [has confidence in me--has entrusted the care of the sheep to me] and even so I know the Father [having full confidence in him, and recognizing him as my Shepherd, director, leader], and [it is in harmony with his arrangement for me and for the sheep that] I lay down my life for the sheep."

The sheep that I am now calling and leading to pasture and caring for and calling by their own names, and who know me, are a very special lot of sheep; in all only a "little flock," for whom Jehovah, the Great Shepherd, has made special arrangements and provisions in his Kingdom of glory. However, these are not all of his sheep, tho they are all yet called and led forth. "Other sheep I have that are not of this fold." I bought the whole world with the one sacrifice for sins, and all who have the true sheep disposition, all who desire to be in harmony with righteousness, truth, and the author of these, I must recognize as my sheep, and must search them out far and near, until every one of them shall be found. But not yet: this will be by and by, after the present "little flock" shall be glorified with me. Then they, with me, shall be the shepherds who will gather in all of the true sheep, delivering them all from the power of the enemy, and bringing so many as will obey my voice ultimately into that glorious condition of oneness, harmony with the heavenly Father and with myself, in which condition, as my sheep, they will be entitled to everlasting life. "Then there shall be one fold and one shepherd," as it is written, "Of whom the whole family both in heaven and in earth is named."--Eph. 3:15.