

Scriptures and Doctrine :: The parable of the good Shepherd

The parable of the good Shepherd - posted by chapel (), on: 2009/9/28 4:53

The parable of the good Shepherd

John 10:1-6

Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber. But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. To him the porter openeth; and 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. This parable spake Jesus unto them: but they understood not what things they were which he spake unto them.

The Pharisees had understood the meaning of the Lord when he spoke of blindness, but they did not understand the parable of the good shepherd. Had they known that they were represented under the figure of thieves and robbers, how great would have been their indignation! Yet such indeed they were, because they robbed God, for they destroyed the souls of his people by their false instructions. They loved to feed on the flesh, and to clothe themselves in the fleece of the sheep, but they cared not for the flock. They sought their own gain, and their own reputation, but not the glory of God.

What is meant by their climbing over the wall into the sheepfold, instead of entering by the door? The door represents Christ. The Pharisees did not come in by the door, for they did not believe in the Savior. But who is the shepherd of the sheep? How many little children could answer, "Jesus is the good Shepherd!" Some could say, "He is my shepherd." They know He is their shepherd, because they love him.

How did Jesus show he was the true shepherd? By his manner of coming in to the fold, and by his manner of going out. He did not climb over the wall, as thieves and robbers do, but entered by the door, openly declaring that he was the Son of God. "To him the porter opens." Does not the porter represent the prophets? Christ was the Shiloh of whom Jacob had spoken nearly two thousand years before, and the Lamb of God to whom John the Baptist had lately pointed.

He showed he was the Shepherd of the sheep by his manner of going out. He led his flock. He called them by their names, according to the custom of shepherds in the East; when he called them, he went before them. None but the true shepherd could lead the sheep; strangers would have been forced to drive them. It is very interesting to behold an eastern shepherd going before his sheep and leading them to their pastures. His flock know the voice of their own shepherd, and would not obey the call of any other.

Nathanael was one of the sheep of Christ. When Jesus saw him, he said, "Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no deceit." Thus he showed he knew him. He was like a shepherd calling his sheep by its name. Did Nathanael hear the shepherd's voice? Yes, he replied; "You are the Son of God; you are the King of Israel." The man born blind was another of Christ's sheep. When the shepherd said to him, "Do you believe on the Son of God?" he soon replied, "Lord, I believe. Have we heard the voice of the shepherd, calling us to follow him to the green pastures? None but his sheep hear that voice. They hear it sounding in the depths of their hearts, saying, "Come unto me, all you that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." They listen to the voice, and say to their own souls, "Return unto your rest, O my soul." They feel safe while they follow their Shepherd. Each says to Him, "Cause me to know the way wherein I should walk." (Ps. 143:8.) The poor helpless sheep cannot tell which is the path that leads to glory, but his shepherd can. After passing through some dark valley, the sheep says, "When my spirit was overwhelmed within me, you knew my path." (Ps. 142:3.) The further the sheep goes in the way, the more trust he feels in his shepherd; and when he comes to the edge of the last valley he is able to say, "Though I pass through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me." We know what lies beyond that valley—Mount Zion. It is to that fair mountain the shepherd conducts his flock.

But while other shepherds are of a different nature from the sheep they tend, the good shepherd has taken on him the nature of his flock. "The Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters." (Rev. 7:17.) Having fed, and led them upon earth, he will feed and lead them in heaven. We shall never cease to require a shepherd's care. It is a delight to those who love Jesus to think that He will always be their shepherd and t

hey his sheep.

Favell Lee Mortimer

Re: The parable of the good Shepherd, on: 2009/9/29 1:07

This blessed me Brother Lee.

This part especially -

"None but his sheep hear that voice. They hear it sounding in the depths of their hearts, saying, "Come unto me, all you that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." They listen to the voice, and say to their own souls, "Return unto your rest, O my soul." They feel safe while they follow their Shepherd. Each says to Him, "Cause me to know the way wherein I should walk." (Ps. 143:8.)

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Amen! Heaven is next! :-)

Re: Christ explains the parable of the good shepherd - posted by chapel (), on: 2009/9/29 4:39

Hi Jesus-is-God,
Praise be to our wonderful Shepherd, happy you were blessed.

The second part.

Christ explains the parable of the good shepherd

John 10:7-13

Then said Jesus unto them again, Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep. All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers: but the sheep did not hear them. I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture. The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly. I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep. But he that is an hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth: and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep. The hireling fleeth, because he is an hireling, and careth not for the sheep.

We are thankful to the Lord for having explained the parable of the good shepherd. Most parts of it can be interpreted with certainty, because they have been explained by the great Teacher.

Nothing can be plainer than the words, "I am the door of the sheep." Jesus is the gate of the fold. No man can come to the Father but by him. He is the way to God. He offered himself as an atonement for our sins, and by faith in that sacrifice we can be saved. There are other shepherds besides Christ, (for his ministers are his under-shepherds,) but there is no door but him.

What do these words signify?—"All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers?" Were the prophets thieves and robbers? No! the true prophets bore witness to Jesus; they were his under-shepherds; they entered by the door and fed the flock. This is the promise made to a faithful minister and to every true believer. "By me, if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture."

But though there are other shepherds besides Christ, there are none like him. None but Jesus could say, "I am come that

t they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." God only can bestow natural life, and He only can bestow spiritual life. How wonderful are the means by which he bestows it! by laying down his own life.

In order to describe what he came to do for his sheep, He enlarged his parable, and related a circumstance which often occurs in pastoral countries.

"He who is an hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, sees the wolf coming, and leaves the sheep and flees; and the wolf catches them, and scatters the sheep."

The Pharisees are called by another name in this part of the parable. They had been compared to thieves, and to strangers, but now they are compared to hirelings. In what did they resemble hirelings? In their want of love to the sheep. How did they betray their want of love? By fleeing at the approach of danger. It is true they could not by dying save the sheep. Why then did they not seek the protection of Him who could? This was their crime—they drove the sheep away from their only Savior, their true shepherd. The Pharisees had tried to drive the blind man away from him, but they had not been able—they had only driven him closer to his shepherd.

Jesus cares for the sheep, and for every lamb in the flock. He found that poor blind man, and gathered him in his arms, and carried him in his bosom. For those who are just beginning to believe in Christ are weak like lambs, although they may have lived many years in the world. We have a shepherd who cares for his sheep. He knows that many of them have been scattered. There are people at this moment who feel that they are sinners, and long for pardon, but no one has taught them to look to Jesus. The good shepherd knows where they are, and he says, "I will seek out my sheep, and I will deliver them out of all places where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day." (Ez. 34:12.) Has this Shepherd sought us, and found us? Can any of us say,
Jesus sought me when a stranger,
Wandering from the fold of God;
He, to rescue me from danger,
Interposed his precious blood?

Favell Lee Mortimer

Re: Christ concludes his discourse concerning the good shepherd - posted by chapel (), on: 2009/9/30 4:43

Christ concludes his discourse concerning the good shepherd

John 10:14-21

I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine. As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the 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. Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father.

There was a division therefore again among the Jews for these sayings. And many of them said, He hath a devil, and is mad; why hear ye him? Others said, These are not the words of him that hath a devil. Can a devil open the eyes of the blind?

In the conclusion of our Lord's interpretation of his parable there is no allusion made to the Pharisees. The only subject dwelt upon is the Good Shepherd's love for his sheep. Those who love their Shepherd must take particular delight in dwelling on this part of the Lord's discourse.

When Jesus said, "I know my sheep," he meant to teach us that he knew them to be his sheep, and loved them with parental affection—yes, with more than a mother's tenderness. A woman may forget her babe, but Jesus says to his church, "I will not forget you." And have the sheep any affection for their shepherd? Yes, they return his love. If he knows their names, they know his voice; if he leads them out, they follow him—"I know my sheep, and am known of mine."

The Savior makes use of a wonderful comparison to give us some idea of the intimate union that exists between the good shepherd and his sheep. The sentence would be better understood if read thus—"I know my sheep, and am known of mine, even as the Father knows me, and as I know the Father," (ver. 14, 15.) What proof has the shepherd given of his love for his sheep? The greatest that could be given—"I lay down my life for the sheep."

When the Savior spoke of his own death, what painful scenes must have risen before his view! The agony in the garden, the insults in the judgment-hall, the ignominy on the cross. But with these painful thoughts there was associated an overwhelming joy—the thought of the numbers he should save by his sufferings. When he uttered these words, "Other sheep I have, which are not of this fold," what an innumerable multitude of beloved children must have been present to his mind! for even at that moment he knew them all by name. Those other sheep were the Gentiles—they were then heathens. Thousands were bowing down to idols, slaughtering their enemies, and reveling in sin—and millions were yet unborn; yet the Savior called them his sheep. He knew they would believe when they heard of his love. Did he think of us when he said, "Other sheep I have?" for we are Gentiles. If we are now in his fold, if he is now our shepherd—then we may be assured that he thought of us also, when he said, "Other sheep I have; them also I must bring."

After declaring his own love for his sheep, He revealed the Father's love also. How much the Father must love the flock, if He loves the Son, because he died for them! This is not the only reason of his love for his Son, but it is one reason. He does indeed love the flock; He has proved it by a wonderful act. "The Father sent the Son to be the Savior of the world." "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins." (1 John 4:10.)

The Son also loved us, and was willing to come—for it is written, "Christ also has loved us, and has given himself for us an offering, and a sacrifice to God." (Eph. 5:2.)

Yet this Savior, so full of love, was spoken of by his creatures in this dreadful manner. Some said, "He has a devil, and is mad." How great was the patience of God, to permit those to live a moment longer who had uttered such an expression! It has been recorded in the Holy Scriptures, and will never be forgotten.

But how many since this discourse was written have felt as they read it, "Truly this was the Son of God! How precious are his words! How sweet are his promises! May the heavenly shepherd own me as his sheep at the last day!"

Favell Lee Mortimer