

# Children, Seek the Good Shepherd



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(1813-1843)

# CHILDREN, SEEK THE GOOD SHEPHERD

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# CHILDREN, SEEK 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.”*

—Isaiah 40:11

## Introduction

Beloved children, Jesus is the Good Shepherd. His arm was stretched out on the cross, and His bosom was pierced with the spear. That arm is able to gather you, and that bosom is open to receive you. I pray for you every day that Christ may save you. He said to me, “Feed My lambs”; and I daily return the words to Him, “Lord, feed my lambs.” In the bowels of Jesus Christ, I long after you all. I believe Christ has gathered some of you. But are no more to be gathered? Are no more green brands to be plucked from the burning? Will no more of you hide beneath the white robe of Jesus? Oh, come! For “yet there is room” (Luk 14:22). Lift up your hearts to God while I tell you something more of the Good Shepherd.

## 1. Jesus Has a Flock.

Every shepherd must have a flock, and so has Christ. I once saw a flock in a valley near Jerusalem. The shepherd went before them and called the sheep, and they knew his voice and followed him. I said, “This is the way Jesus leads His sheep!” Oh, that I may be one of them!

### *A. Christ’s Flock Is a Little Flock.*

Hear what Jesus says: “Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom” (Luk 12:32). *Pray* to be among the little flock. Look at the world—[billions of] men, women, and children of different countries, color, and language all journeying to the Judgment Seat! Is this Christ’s flock? Ah, no! [Many] millions never heard the sweet name of Jesus; and of the rest, the most see no beauty in the Rose of Sharon. Christ’s is a little flock. Look at this town. What crowds press along the streets on a market-day! What a large flock is here! Is this the flock of Christ? No. It is to be feared that most of these are not the brothers and sisters of Christ. They do not bear His likeness. They do not follow the Lamb now and will not follow Him in eternity. Look round the Sunday schools. What a number of young faces are there! How many beaming eyes! How many precious souls! Is this the flock

of Christ? No, no. Most of you have hard and stony hearts. Most of you love pleasure more than [you love] God. Most of you love sin and lightly esteem Christ...I could weep when I think how many of you will live lives of sin, die deaths of horror, and spend an eternity in hell. Beloved children, pray that you may be like the one lily among many thorns—that you may be the few lambs in the midst of a world of wolves.

### *B. Christ's Sheep Are Marked Sheep.*

In almost every flock, the sheep are all marked in order that the shepherd may know them. The mark is often made with tar on the woolly back of the sheep. Sometimes it is the first letter of the owner's name. The use of the mark is that they may not be lost when they wander among other sheep. So it is with the flock of Jesus. Every sheep of His has two marks:

*One mark is made with the blood of Jesus.* Every sheep and lamb in Christ's flock was once guilty and defiled with sin, altogether become filthy. But every one of them has been drawn to the blood of Jesus and washed there. They are all like sheep that "came up from the washing" (Song 4:2). They can all say, "Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood" (Rev 1:5). Have you this mark? Look and see. You can never be in heaven unless you have it. Every one there has washed his robes and "made them white in the blood of the Lamb" (Rev 7:14).

*Another mark is made by the Holy Spirit.* This is not a mark that you can see outside, like the mark on the white wool of the sheep. It is deep, deep in the bosom, where the eye of man cannot look. It is a new heart. "A new heart also will I give you" (Eze 36:26). This is the seal of the Holy Spirit that He gives to all them that believe. With infinite power, He puts forth His unseen hand and silently changes the heart of all that are truly Christ's. Do you have the new heart? You never will go to heaven without it. "Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his" (Rom 8:9). Beloved children, pray for these two marks of the sheep of Jesus—forgiveness through blood and a new heart. Oh, be in earnest to get them and to get them now. Soon the Chief Shepherd will come, and set the sheep on His right hand, and the goats on His left. Where will you be in that day?

### *C. Christ's Sheep All Flock Together.*

Sheep love to go together. A sheep never goes with a wolf or with a dog, but always with the flock. Especially when a storm is coming down, they keep near one another. When the sky turns dark with clouds and the first drops of a thundershower are coming on, the shepherds say that you will see the sheep flocking down from the hills and all meeting together in some sheltered valley. They love to keep together. So it is with the flock of Jesus. They do not love to go with the world, but always one with another. Christian loves Christian. They have the same peace, the same Spirit, the same Shepherd, the same fold on the hills of

immortality. Especially in the dark and cloudy day—such as our day is likely to be—the sheep of Christ are driven together to weep together. They love to pray together, to sing praise together, and to hide in Christ together...Little children, “love one another” (1Jo 4:7). Make companions of those that fear God. Flee from all others. Who can take fire into [his] bosom and not be burned?...

## **2. What Jesus Does for His Flock.**

### *A. He Died for Them.*

“I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep” (Joh 10:11). This is the chief beauty in Christ. The wounds that marred His fair body make Him altogether lovely in a needy sinner’s eye. All that are now and ever shall be the sheep of Christ were once condemned to die. The wrath of God abode upon them. They were ready to drop into the burning lake. Jesus had compassion upon them, left His Father’s bosom, emptied Himself, became a worm and no man, and died under the sins of many. “While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us” (Rom 5:8). This is the grace of the Lord Jesus. Everyone in the flock can say, “[He] loved me, and gave himself for me” (Gal 2:20).

### *B. He Seeks and Finds Them.*

We would never seek Christ, if He did not seek us first. We would never find Christ, if He did not find us. “For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost” (Luk 19:10). I once asked a shepherd, “How do you find sheep that are lost in the snow?” “Oh,” he said, “we go down into the deep ravines, where the sheep go in storms. There we find the sheep huddled together beneath the snow.” “And are they able to come out when you take away the snow?” “Oh, no. If they had to take a single step to save their lives, they could not do it. So we just go in and carry them out.” Ah, this is the very way Jesus saves lost sheep. He finds us in the deep pit of sin, frozen and dead. If we had to take a single step to save our souls, we could not do it. But He reaches down His arm and carries us out. This He does for every sheep He saves. Glory, glory, glory be to Jesus, the Shepherd of our souls!...

### *C. He Feeds Them.*

“By me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture” (Joh 10:9). If Jesus has saved you, He will feed you. He will feed your *body*. “I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread” (Psa 37:25)...He will feed your *soul*. He that feeds the little flower in the cleft of the craggy precipice, where no hand of man can reach it, will feed your soul with silent drops of heavenly dew.

I shall never forget the story of a little girl in Belfast, Ireland. She was at a Sunday school and gained a Bible as a prize for her good conduct. It became to her a

treasure indeed. She was fed out of it. Her parents were wicked. She often read to them, but they became worse and worse. This broke Eliza's heart. She took to her bed and never rose again. She desired to see her teacher. When he came, he said, "You are not without a companion, my dear child," taking up her Bible. "No," she replied,

*"Precious Bible? What a treasure,  
Does the Word of God afford!*

*All I want for life or pleasure,  
Food and med'cine, shield and sword.*

*Let the world account me poor,  
Having this, I ask no more."*<sup>1</sup>

She had scarcely repeated the lines when she hung back her head and died. Beloved children, this is the way Jesus feeds His flock. He is a tender, constant, almighty Shepherd. If you become His flock, He will feed you all the way to glory.

### **3. Jesus Cares for His Lambs.**

Every careful shepherd deals gently with the lambs of the flock. When the flocks are travelling, the lambs are not able to go far: they often grow weary and lie down. Now, a kind shepherd stoops down, puts his gentle arm beneath them, and lays them in his bosom. Such a shepherd is the Lord Jesus, and saved children are His lambs. He gathers them with His arm and carries them in His bosom. Many a guilty lamb He has gathered and carried to His Father's house. Some He has gathered out of this place that you and I once knew well.

#### *A. Before He Came into the World, Jesus Cared for Lambs.*

Samuel was a very little child, no bigger than the least of you when he was converted. He was girded with a linen ephod. His mother made him a little coat and brought it to him every year. One night as he slept in the holy place, near where the ark of God was kept, he heard a voice cry, "Samuel!" He started up and ran to old Eli, whose eyes were dim, and said, "Here am I; for thou calledst me." And Eli said, "I called not; lie down again." He went and lay down, but a second time the voice cried, "Samuel!" He rose and went to Eli, saying, "Here am I; for thou didst call me." And Eli said, "I called not, my son; lie down again." A third time the holy voice cried, "Samuel!" He arose and went to Eli with the same words. Then Eli perceived that the Lord had called the child. Therefore, Eli said, "Go, lie down: and it shall be, if he call thee, that thou shalt say, Speak, LORD; for thy servant heareth." So he went and lay down. A fourth time—how often Christ will call on little children!—

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<sup>1</sup> John Newton, "Precious Bible! What a Treasure," *Olney Hymns* (1779).

the voice cried, “Samuel! Samuel!” Then Samuel answered, “Speak; for thy servant heareth.” Thus did Jesus gather this lamb with His arm and carried him in His bosom. For “And Samuel grew, and the LORD was with him...for the LORD revealed himself to Samuel in Shiloh” (1Sa 3:5-10; 19, 21).

*Little children, of whom I travail in birth until Christ be formed in you, pray that the same Lord would reveal Himself to you.* Some people say [that] you are too young to be converted and saved. But Samuel was not too young. Christ can open the eyes of a child as easily as of an old man. Yea, youth is the best time to be saved in. You are not too young to die, not too young to be judged, and therefore not too young to be brought to Christ. Do not be contented to hear about Christ from your teachers. Pray that He would reveal Himself to you. God grant there may be many little Samuels amongst you.

### *B. Jesus Cares for Lambs Still.*

The late Duke of Hamilton had two sons. The eldest [became sick with tuberculosis] when a boy, which ended in his death. Two ministers went to see him at the family seat<sup>2</sup> near Glasgow, where he lay. After prayer, the youth took his Bible from under his pillow and turned to 2 Timothy 4:7-8: “I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness.” [He] added, “This, sirs, is all my comfort!” When his death approached, he called his younger brother to his bed and spoke to him with great affection. He ended with these remarkable words: “And now, Douglas, in a little time you will be a duke, but I shall be a king”...

Would you wish to be gathered thus? Go now to some lonely place—kneel down and call upon the Lord Jesus. Do not leave your knees until you find Him. Pray to be gathered with His arm and carried in His bosom. Take hold of the hem of His garment and say, “I must—I dare not—I will not let Thee go except Thou bless me.”



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<sup>2</sup> **family seat** – principal residence of the landed gentry.