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**HE CARETH FOR YOU**  
**By G. T. Bustin**

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PREFACE

For twenty years I have wanted to write a booklet based upon the teachings of the 23rd Psalm, but just didn't get the task done. During the latter part of 1957 (a year of strange and fiery tests) I was awakened one morning about one o'clock. After being in prayer for an hour or more regarding perplexing problems, my soul was specially drawn out in meditation upon this psalm. Before the break of day I had the title -- "HE CARETH FOR YOU" -- and most of the chapter headings as they are herein given. The material for the manuscript was prepared while aboard the S. S. President Wilson sailing for Japan and Hong Kong while Gerald, my son, and I were en route to New Guinea.

As I implore the patience of my readers for the imperfection of these pages, I also lift my heart in prayer to our Heavenly Shepherd that He may take the truth contained therein and make it a blessing to many of His dear sheep. If you, my friend, have been helped by this booklet, then may you in turn help others by scattering these booklets near and far.

G. T. Bustin

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THE SONG OF THE SYRIAN HILLS

The 23rd Psalm is everywhere known as the Shepherd Psalm. It has been called The Pearl of the Psalms, The Song of the Shepherds, The Nightingale of the Psalms, The Sheep's Journey

with the Shepherd, The Christian's Creed, and The Gospel in Miniature. It might be well termed The Biography of Saints, as it is in fact the autobiography of David. One has said, "David's autograph is on every line."

With the possible exception of what is commonly called The Lord's Prayer, and John 3:16, this psalm is the best loved of all the world's literature, and is the most often quoted by infant lips, students, scholars, speakers, saints; and is the most comforting word spoken to the suffering and the dying.

These six simple verses consisting of only 118 common words, easily read within sixty seconds, have furnished more thought for songs, sermons, articles, booklets, and books than any other equal number of verses in the Bible.

As to the authorship of the psalm we are certain, but as to the exact time in the life of David when it was written we cannot say. Some believe it was composed in his shepherd-hood days, while others feel this period was premature. Some of us like to think of this as a psalm of life -- born, grew, and matured. It is easy to believe that its birthplace was somewhere among the hills of Bethlehem, beneath the clear star-studded skies, surrounded by slumbering sheep. Possibly a sense of loneliness grips the shepherd boy, and suddenly this is augmented by the muffled roar of a lion in the nearby shades of the valley.

In all probability this psalm was given as one of the "songs in the night." Unusual blessings are born in the hours of unusual darkness. It is not hard to believe that this psalm of psalms came to the world through great trials. It might help us to appreciate this child of the night if we can get a glimpse of shepherd life which is by no means the life of a softling.

These caretakers of sheep are not always able to share the common lot of men who, at the close of the day's toil, can lie down upon pleasant beds for their rest. Shepherds are often compelled to lead their flocks to fields afar in order to find green pastures and fresh water. At times the shepherds are able to group together in their night vigils about the camp fire, but on other occasions they abide alone. It was doubtless on such an occasion that David slew the lion and the bear. It may have been at such time when this song of songs had its beginning. Bear with me in a bit of reverie in the paragraph which follows:

For days, if not weeks, the brave Shepherd had been leading his sheep out over the hills, across the plains, and through the valley. He is now on the homeward stretch. Yonder over the gray hills is Bethlehem. A few more warm days and cool nights; a few more camp fires to build; a few more valleys to pass through; a few more enemies to face while protecting his sheep, and then he shall see home and shall drink freely again from the well of Bethlehem.

As the evening shadows lengthened the faithful shepherd leads his sheep from the wayside pasture to the place of refreshing waters "beside the still waters." The camp site is selected, examined, and the grass well beaten down to make sure that no venomous serpent is near. A fire is started, then the sheep are bedded for the night behind the wall of giant boulders. The brave boy prepares his scanty evening meal as the sun drops beyond the Palestinian hills and settles in the Great Sea beyond. As the last traces of the golden glow fades from view, the fair evening star

(Venus) begins to show its face. Far away in the south, Sirius, the brightest star of the heavens, comes from its hiding place. Straightway myriads of the mighty hosts of heaven appear in their nocturnal journeys. Alone, except for his slumbering sheep, our shepherd boy naturally turns his thoughts toward God and home. The brave lad lays more and larger wood on the fire, thus breaking the chill of the brisk mountain air, also serves to ward off a possible attack of wild beasts upon his flock.

Yonder on the eastern horizon arises the constellation of Orion (the legendary Mighty Hunter) with its great giants. Two of these stars, Betelgeux and Rigel, are said to be many thousands of times larger than our sun which is fourteen hundred thousand times larger than our earth. Climbing the eastern skyway is Aldebaran, said to be 25,000 times the size of the sun. There is Arcturus (mentioned by Job 38:32) which is said to be more than 25,000,000 miles in diameter. Away out in the depths of space shines Antares, the unspeakable giant of the heavens, calculated to be 335,000,000 miles in diameter -- so large that if it were hung out where our sun is, the planets of Mercury, Venus, Earth, and Mars would all be circulating inside this star.

(Note: Get my recent book, "WHEN I CONSIDER THY HEAVENS." Price 35c).

While resting upon his bed of straw and gazing into the heavens David is reminded of the fact that he is not alone. The Creator and Sustainer of the stars in their courses is his Shepherd. As he considers the heavens and the might of his soul -- Shepherd who has made all of these celestial bodies and shepherds them in their eternal circuits he becomes thrilled with the thought that he can never have a need which is beyond the ability of his Shepherd to supply. The Shepherd -- Lord also makes His sheep to lie down in pastures of green and leads them to the pleasant watering places, restores and recreates their weary souls and drooping spirits, leads them in paths of pleasantness and righteousness, guides and guards them through the darksome valleys, shames his enemies by providing a feast of fat things in their very presence, anoints their aching head with heavenly oil, quenches their thirst with an overflowing cup of living water, hedges them about with goodness and mercy following, and with His own sweet presence leading onward over the homeward trail. Thus the psalm of psalms was born.

Perhaps this wonderful psalm was not penned until later years -- after the psalmist had sinned and was restored, had suffered and was healed, had been tested and had triumphed, had hungered and was fed, had passed through the valley where he was protected and comforted, and the lights of his eternal home were casting their glow along the last turn of the trail. Personally experienced, Divinely inspired, and sublimely inscribed, we have the 23rd Psalm -- The Poem of Life.

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## Chapter 1 THE SOVEREIGN -- SHEPHERD

"The LORD is my shepherd."

In his natural loneliness David finds that he is not alone. He discovers that the Shepherd of the stars is his Shepherd too, and that he is being provided for with a care which far exceeds that which is his for the slumbering sheep about him.

The English word LORD as used here is from the Hebrew word JEHOVAH. This word was held in such reverence and awe by the Jewish people until it was never pronounced by the masses. Once each year it was used, on the day of the Atonement, by the high priest in the most holy place.

This word JEHOVAH means the Great I Am, the Source of Life, the Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End. He is the Eternal One. Even the heavens wax old and are changed as a garment, but He remaineth ever the same. David saw that this Great and Mighty God -- the Creator and Sustainer -- of all things was his Shepherd. He saw that the Shepherd of his soul is the Power which propels all stars and worlds and sends them racing along their ethereal tracks; He is the Fire which lights their glowing orbs, and the Gravitation which holds them in their ordained circuits. "This LORD," David says, "is my Shepherd." David makes no mention here of religion. How foolish are men who make a god of their religion, as though religion within itself can do something for them. It is not religion that the poor world stands in need of. We need this living Shepherd -- one who knows us and cares for us.

The word LORD means one with Authority, the Manager, the Proprietor, the Ruler, and our common word Boss. This is exactly what Christ is to every true believer. Note the usual order in the New Testament -- "Our Lord Jesus Christ." Christ first becomes our Lord, then our Saviour. Every penitent must acknowledge the lordship of Christ before he can truly confess him as his Saviour. It is the height of folly to speak of people being saved but not surrendered. The surrender comes first. The sincere bowing penitent means surrender. Without surrender so -- called faith is a farce. The unsundered soul cannot believe to the saving of his life from sin, and no one is saved until he is saved from sin. The devil is well pleased with all so -- called evangelicals who teach that men can be saved of God and still abide in their sins. "His name shall be called Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins." Upon our surrender to Him as Lord it is easy to believe Him to be our Saviour.

"The Lord is my Shepherd." No idle, or surplus words here. Even the smallest word counts. Not that He has been, nor some time shall be, but is at this very minute. He is my Saviour and Shepherd now. No hope so, nor think so. He is now my Redeemer, Saviour, and Shepherd.

"The Lord is my Shepherd." What a difference two small letters make. How different if David had said "a" Shepherd. The striking feature of this psalm is that of the personal pronouns. Within the limits of these few lines we have 26 personal pronouns. The entire psalm is intensely personal.

A word of warning is in order here. It is an easy matter for a church member to presume that the Lord is his Shepherd. "My Shepherd" implies that we are His sheep. How foolish for worldlings, formalists, and sinners, or wolves in sheep's clothing, to think of these words as belonging to them. How meaningless for unborn-again church members to sing these wonderful words, or to try to extract comfort from them by quoting them. This psalm is the Shepherd's Psalm

prepared for the sheep of God -- those who are His own, not only by redemption, but by a personal surrender to the ownership of God. It is nonsense to speak of the Lord as my Shepherd if I am following another master. The Lord is the Shepherd of His sheep only. The Bible speaks of wandering sheep, lost sheep, but they are not in the fold of Christ. True it is that He died for all, yet only those who follow Him are His sheep, and they alone have the right to say, "The Lord is my Shepherd." The soul-comfort, and soul-food of this psalm is provided only for the sheep of God. Many an old goat, or wolf in a sheep's robe, would steal the food from the Master's sheep. We are not left in the dark as to who are His sheep. The Good Shepherd says, "My sheep hear My voice, I know them, and they follow Me." The sheep of God are a peculiar set. "They know not the voice of strangers, "and a stranger will they not follow." Our Lord's sheep do not follow the world with its follies, fads and fashions. They are crucified unto the world, and the world is crucified unto them.

The sheep of our Saviour-Shepherd are not generally noted by the world for their brilliance, neither are they without their faults, but they know their Master's voice, and they follow His leadings.

Sinner friend, do not think me hard or cruel, but you know that you are not a sheep of God. God loves you and longs to number you among His flock, but Christ must first become your personal Lord and Saviour before He can become your Shepherd. You may even pride yourself as being a loyal member of some creed or church, and might even confirm your claim by a commendation from your religious leader, but the one question of importance is: Are you following Christ? Nothing else counts. To follow Christ means the forsaking of all else, everyone else, and even yourself also. Mt. 16:24; Luke 14:26, 33. Jesus forsook all and freely laid down His life in sacrifice that you might be delivered from sin and become the sheep of God. Come unto Him now renouncing your plans, your sins, and yourself. Call upon Him and you shall be saved. Our Lord will lift you from the fold of Satan into His own fold, and then you can truly say, "The Lord is my Shepherd."

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## Chapter 2

### FAITH'S DECLARATION

"I shall not want."

A little girl sweetly said, "The Lord is my Shepherd, and He is all I want." What sheep of God cannot say the same? What follower of Christ could have any desire or need beyond His ability to provide? Oh that our Lord may have a mighty army of soldier-sheep with knowledge and courage to proclaim Christ as an all sufficient Saviour and Shepherd -- the Shepherd who can and who cares. A partial Saviour is not adequate, and a partial shepherd is not the Shepherd of the 23rd Psalm. Faith -- true faith -- exultantly exclaims, "Christ is all I need." Unbelief in religious robes says, "Christ is all right, but something more is needed."

Your writer was once invited to speak in a certain church. He had been asked by a saintly member who had arranged with his pastor for the service. The pastor undertook to introduce the speaker in words about as follows: "And now I wish to introduce our guest speaker, the Rev. Mr.

Bustin. I don't know this man, but he is well recommended by Brother -- who has known him for a number of years. I don't understand how Mr. Bustin can go out and open missionary work as he does, for I hear that he has no one to trust in but God." Such an insult! As if God were on the verge of bankruptcy.

Another professed preacher of the Gospel said, "Talk about faith! Faith is all right, but I want something which I can fry." Shameful and wicked indeed is such an expression.

After two thousand years the so-called church of Jesus Christ has a wretched conception of the faith as was taught by Christ and His apostles. Despite the fact that the early followers of Christ put His principles of faith into practice, and left to us the records of the proven practicability of these principles, they are unacceptable to professed Christians in general. Modern religionists who erroneously call themselves Christians, prefer paltry props, and defective sight rather than the way of faith. In substance they say, "Christ has His place, but He is not adequate for my needs."

Jesus said, "Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on . . ." Mt. 6:25, 31. He intersperses this truth with, "O ye of little faith." He goes on to tell us how this faith works -- to give us the formula. We dismiss His message with the stupid statement, "Things are different today." True, things are always changing and are, therefore, utterly inadequate. Our Shepherd never changes. His promises are surer than the stars in their courses.

Someone has illustrated the folly of unbelief by a baby salmon's supposed fear of swimming out of the river into the great ocean, and as though it said, "Mother, I am afraid to leave our big river and go out into the ocean, for the ocean might dry up and we would die of thirst." God calls men to go and work for Him and gives them the promise, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you." These men say, "This is not enough. I must see where my support is to come from." God says, "My grace is sufficient for thee." Men of unbelief say, "This may be true, but I must have something extra. Our Saviour-Shepherd says, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature . . .", "and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." Mark 16:15; Mt. 28:20. Men of unbelief say, "That is all right, but you should have some sort of human guarantee before you go.

Hannah W. Smith told of an old colored lady she once met, who was poor indeed, but being rich in faith was a joyous Christian. "Ah, Nancy," said a gloomy Christian lady to her one day, "it is all well enough to be happy now; but I should think the thoughts of your future would sober you.

"Only suppose, for instance, you should have a spell of sickness, and be unable to work; or suppose your present employers should move away, and no one else should give you anything to do; or suppose -- "Stop!" cried Nancy, "I never supposes. De Lord is my Shepherd, and I knows I shall not want. And, Honey," she added, to her gloomy friend, "it's all dem supposes as is makin' you so mis'able. You better give dem all up, and just trust de Lord."

Oh, that we might come to the simplicity of the faith of Christ! That we might have an achieving faith, pure and simple -- a "faith which does not wait to see, but causes things to be seen.

How silly it would be for sheep to fret and fume, and stay awake at night worrying about tomorrow's grazing grounds and watering places. They take no thought of the morrow. That is the Shepherd's responsibility. Since He cares, they need not care. This is the truth which our Shepherd would have us grasp and by it grow. "Take no thought." "Be careful for nothing." "Casting all your care upon Him, for He careth for you."

Faith is the basic principle of the Christian life. There is no alternative. Faith there must be, or life there cannot be. A supposed faith which is out of harmony with the Bible is a huge farce. The faith which is taught by the Bible is not merely a passive faith which claims to believe God, and yet accomplishes nothing. Biblical faith is always active and fruit is sure to follow. (Note the accomplishments of faith as recorded in Heb. 11. "By faith . through faith".)

Matthew Henry said, "An active faith can give thanks for a promise, though it be not as yet performed; knowing that God's bonds are as good as ready money.

"I shall not want." "O fear the Lord, ye His saints: for there is no want to them that fear Him.

The young lions do lack and suffer hunger: but they that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing." Ps. 34:9-10.

Andrew Murray said, "We have a God who delights in impossibilities."

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### Chapter 3 DISCIPLINED REST

"He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: He leadeth me beside the still waters.

"He maketh me to lie down The Lord does not force His saints to any prescribed course, but He impels them by the abundant provisions of His grace, and by His all wise providence.

Sheep, we are told, will never lie down so long as they are hungry, nor while they are possessed with fear. They must have ample food to satisfy their hunger, and they must be relieved of fear. The good shepherd leads his sheep into pastures of tender grass, and he drives away their enemies. The sheep feed and are satisfied, then lie down in contentment. Their wild wanderings cease. Our Saviour-Shepherd provides richly for those who faithfully follow His leadings. They find satisfaction for their souls in the pastures of God. There is no hankering after the world's vain ways, nor need they wander about from creed to creed, nor to false cults, to find that which satisfies. "He satisfieth the longing soul, and filleth the hungry soul with goodness." "They shall not be ashamed in the evil time: and in the days of famine they shall be satisfied." Ps. 37:19. The

people of God are not dependent upon secondary causes. They shall be satisfied when the famine is on, and when the depression covers the land.

He maketh me to lie down in the midst of plenty. Some busy souls would kill themselves with activity, as if their very existence depended solely upon their own movements. Some of God's people are on the go day and night, as if the work of the kingdom depended solely upon them. (True, Satan is pleased when he can get us into a state of ease and indifference, yet when he finds a wide awake believer whom he cannot stop he will try to run that soul to death) . Rest is as truly a part of the plan of God as work. Without rest a breakdown is inevitable. Even the Son of God was conscious of His need of rest, also gave orders to his overworked disciples to "come ye apart and rest awhile."

It is worthy of note also that in the early stages of sainthood we must have the pleasant experiences of rest and refreshment. Nothing is here spoken of heavy blows, hard trials, and dark valleys. The young saint is hardly prepared for these experiences. Young believers are sometimes inclined to feel that they are being sorely tried when God, in His kind providence, makes them to lie down. The main thought in this connection is that of pleasantness and plenty -- ample provision and pleasant rest.

#### Waters of Rest

"Beside the still waters." The margin reads, "waters of rest." What can naturally be more restful and refreshing than to camp beside a babbling brook, or a mountain stream, of clear cold water? What can be more restful and quieting to frazzled nerves than the enchanting music of such a stream? We are told that sheep will not drink where the water is ruffled, therefore the shepherd must find, or prepare, some quiet cove as the drinking place for his flock.

Quietness and rest of soul are not produced by leading the sheep of God away from all troubled waters and wild tempests. Our Saviour-Shepherd gives us peace in the midst of pain, glory while in the grip of grief, and rest in the face of raging tempests.

Drummond told of two painters, each of whom painted a picture to illustrate his conception of rest. The first chose for his scene a still, lone lake far up in the mountains.

The second spread upon his canvas a thundering waterfall with the fragile bow of a tree bending over the foam. At the fork of the branch, almost wet with the cataracts spray, sat a robin on its nest.

The first was only stagnation; the second was rest.

"There is a point of rest  
At the great center of the cyclone's force,  
A silence at its secret source;  
A little child might slumber undisturbed,  
Without the ruffle of one fair curl,  
In that strange, central calm, amid the mighty whirl."

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## Chapter 4 RESTORATION

"He restoreth my soul."

Entirely too much emphasis has been given to the idea that of necessity sheep are "wanderers" and "strayers." In certain circles the story of the sheep with a broken leg -- purposely broken by the shepherd due to its willful wanderings -- has gone its endless rounds. (The truth is seldom mentioned in this connection that this sheep was the only one of that particular flock whose leg was broken as a chastisement for having wandered, and that this was the exception of the flock rather than the rule ). In the same realm we often hear the text, "All we like sheep have gone astray." There is nothing wrong with this text. It is God's Word. The mistake is in the misinterpretation. The "all" in this text expresses the universality of sin. "We have all sinned." No man by nature can say he is right with God, therefore needs not a Saviour. By nature all stand guilty before God, and all need a Saviour. The text does not imply that those who, by the grace of God, have found deliverance from their sin, and now delight in following their Saviour-Shepherd, must wander from Him again. God's grace is sufficient. Sin is not a necessity. Our Shepherd keeps all who hear and heed His voice.

"He restoreth my soul." This most certainly does teach that there is restoration for the wanderer from the fold of God. No believer who falls should remain in the mire, but, like the prodigal, should arise and return to the Father. Better still, when once a slip has been made, then and there is the time to return and be restored. The sun need not set upon your sin-stained soul. Bow at once and seek the forgiveness of your Shepherd, for great is His mercy. The tender Shepherd loves the wandering one and seeks to draw him back. This wonderful word, however, is no guarantee that every wanderer shall be restored. The wanderer has a will of his own and can be restored only on condition that he turn from his wanderings, and return to the Good Shepherd in penitence and faith just as any other sinner must do. God's cry is, "Turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel." Human beings differ from natural sheep. Men know from whence they have wandered, and they, like the prodigal, know their way back to the Shepherd's fold. Our Shepherd calls, and calls, but he will never force the wanderer back into the fold.

A beautiful story is told of a shepherd in the highlands of Scotland. An only daughter, dear and precious to his heart, specially loved to hear her father call his sheep. He had a unique way of calling. The daughter was trapped and led away into a life of sin. Her shame prevented her from revealing her whereabouts to her fond father.

The brokenhearted shepherd abandoned his flock and fields to go in search of his wandering child. On and on he went looking and longing for his precious daughter. Eventually he was seen and heard along the streets in the slums of London. Passersby were startled as they heard this highlander give his shepherd's call up and down the streets and byways. It appeared that the poor shepherd's search would be in vain, but with a heavy heart he continued his course in every

place where his wayward lamb might be found. Heartbroken and weary he was almost at the point of abandoning his unrewarded efforts when a sin-scarred inmate of a house of ill-fame abruptly arose amid her giddy and godless company and rushed out into the street to see from where came that peculiar call so precious to her in her unstained life of the yesteryears. Can it be the cherished voice of her beloved father? Is it possible that he loves her still and has come to call her back to his heart and home? Yes, it is true, for there he stands calling again. Her heart flutters with mingled joy and shame as she rushes down the street and flies into the arms of her forgiving father. "Wandering sheep, far from the fold, the tender Shepherd is calling, calling still. Come now and know again the caresses of His loving care.

David knew by a sad experience that his Shepherd restores and forgives the poor straying sheep who pleads for mercy. Peter followed afar off, then fell an easy prey to Satan's snare. He, too, hurriedly sought a place of penitence where he wept his way back to the place of peace and pardoning love. Let us not think that wandering and straying are the rule among the sheep of God. The Greek word for sheep is literally "that which walks forward." This is in keeping with Jesus' words, "My sheep follow Me." Wandering is the exception and not the rule. We need not stray away, and if we keep close to our faithful Shepherd and readily heed His voice we shall not sin.

#### Restoration Provided In Redemption

In addition to the commonly accepted idea of soul restoration taught in this text there is a blessed truth which is too often overlooked. It is shamefully true that only a half redemption is often taught by some who boast of being thoroughly fundamental in doctrine. No truth on earth has been so much hated as that which emphatically declares that a full redemption is freely offered to the whole of mankind by our Saviour-Shepherd. Satan the inveterate enemy of both sheep and Shepherd is pleased with the man-made theology which would leave us half-healed to limp through life with no hope of deliverance until we reach the door of death.

It is not the purpose of this bit of exposition to teach some particular brand of theology. The Bible is not a book of theory. It is one of truth -- glorious truth which promises freedom for the fettered soul. Jesus said, "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." In the same chapter He said, "If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed." John 8:36. We are all agreed that freedom from the power of Satan and the guilt of sin, and for the most part we are agreed that we need deliverance from the nature of Satan and the pollution of sin. Many part at the point of truth which asserts that this need -- complete restoration of soul -- is abundantly provided for through redeeming grace. Many will not believe this. They like the half and half way. They are much like the little girl who remonstrated with her mother against asking forgiveness for her sin; "for", said the child, "I think sin is rather nice."

"His Name shall be called Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins." All professed Christians believe there is a present pardon from our guilt of sin, but why do all not believe there is present purity from our defilement of sin? Oh, when will all who are called believers accept the plain truth of the Gospel -- the whole Gospel -- and freely throw to the winds the conflicting theories of men? Let tongue and pen proclaim in language clear and plain, that the Gospel of our Saviour-Shepherd declares there is both pardon and purity provided now for every believing soul. There is a free cancellation for every sin, and there is a full cleansing from every

pollution. Through unbelief and disobedience to God we lost the image of God from our soul. Through faith and obedience to Christ the image is restored. Paul tells us this image consists of "knowledge," "righteousness," and "true holiness." (See Col. 3:10 and Eph. 4:24). The same writer says, "But of Him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption." I Cor. 1:30. "For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil," I Jno. 3:8. "Who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." Titus 2:14.

## Soul Recreation

Another truth presents itself at this point which is certainly worthy of our consideration, even though it is often passed over by those who believe in full and present deliverance from sin. It is an easy matter for us to adopt the idea that we are delivered once for all, and that, since we have found a complete cure for our plague and have the fullness of the Spirit dwelling within, there is therefore nothing left for us to do but to live and labor for Christ victoriously. Many with this conception of the Christian life have forged ahead heedless of their need of soul recreation, or restoration, until they ran into discouragement and defeat. At this point some are tempted to believe there was something wrong with their consecration, or even to disbelieve in the provisions of God's grace for a completely victorious life.

The soul, like the body, must have its pauses, or restoration periods, or else suffer a breakdown. A man may be pronounced a subject of perfect health, but let him take little time for necessary food, sleep, and rest, and the results will be a ruined body and wrecked nerves. The same truth applies to the soul.

The soul of man might be likened unto a well charged battery. It is made to take the wear and work of every day's demands and to hold the necessary charge, provided there are no shorts, corrosion, loose connections; provided the water is kept intact, and the generator is working well. Should any of these troubles develop, and the necessities be lacking, a rest period and a recharging will soon be required. Even then extra heavy duty may demand special recharging.

It is only as we keep well related and tightly held in place by our Saviour-Shepherd, and with the generator of prayer working well, that we can keep our soul in order. Even at the best, special seasons of retreat to the secret place of waiting before God, and drinking in the sincere milk of His word, are essential if we would be at our best for Him. "Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest awhile," said Jesus to His crowd-pressed disciples. Even our Lord had these special seasons of silent watches for Himself. How much more do we need these times of soul recreation -- shut out from even our dearest friends and closest kin, and shut in with our Saviour-Shepherd who waits to restore our souls.

"Wait on the Lord: be of good courage, and He shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the Lord." Ps. 27:14.

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## Chapter 5 HE LEADETH ME

"He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for His Name's sake."

"Marvelous grace of our loving Lord!" Two tiny pronouns tied together by a mighty verb. Naturally these two pronouns are as far apart as the poles of the universe. But for the fact of restoration made possible through the redemption of the Lamb of God, He could not lead us. He would have nothing in common with us, for He cannot have fellowship with darkness. He voluntarily bridged the mighty gulf of death, separating God and man, with His own bruised body. The veil of the temple was rent in twain, letting man into God and letting God's glory out to man. Man can again walk and talk with His Maker. The Saviour-Shepherd can lead us again "in the paths of righteousness." Were it not for the "Lamb slain from the foundation of the world," we would not have had this glorious psalm. We would not have had the story of Enoch who walked with God for three hundred years. All of God's great dealings with mankind since the fall were made possible through the "slain Lamb."

### He Personally Leads Me

How amazing that He spoke the suns and stars into space, and set them spinning along celestial paths, and shepherds them in their courses, is my Shepherd and reigns to personally lead me. Guardian angels we may have along life's dangerous ways, but here we are told that our Lord Himself leads us. This is too much for our small minds to grasp. How can He in person lead His many sheep? How can He love and care for each of us as adequately as if He had only one sheep to care for? I have no answer. According to astronomy, the 2,400 millions of human beings which crowd our earth are a mere sprinkle in number when compared to the myriads of suns spinning far out in the depths of space. (Sir James Jeans estimated that there are probably as many suns in the heavens as there are grains of sand on all the seashores in the world) . The Psalmist says, concerning our Sovereign-Shepherd, "He telleth the number of the stars; He calleth them by their names. Great is our Lord, and of great power. His understanding is infinite." Ps. 147:4,5. Our Good Shepherd "Calleth His own sheep by name, and leadeth them out." "But the very hairs of your head are all numbered." Mt. 10:30. How majestic and how minute is the care of our Shepherd.

### HE LEADETH THEM OUT

He leadeth them out, and His sheep gladly follow,  
Content to be near Him, where'er it may be,  
No longing have they for the world or its pleasure,  
While His voice they can hear, and His face they can see.

The voice of the stranger can never allure them  
Away from their Shepherd, away from His fold;  
His voice to them, of all voices, the sweetest,  
His love far more precious than diamond or gold.

He leads, and they follow, where dangers are hidden;  
O'er paths that are lonely, where deep waters flow.  
The touch of His hand gives strength for the journey,  
As onward and upward and homeward they go.

Tho' pressed in the conflict, and often so weary,  
They know He is near them, each burden to share,  
And "filled with the Spirit," they see in the distance  
The light of the City, that lieth four square.

He leads and they follow, His reproach gladly bearing  
The cross, all their glory, come joy or come pain,  
In humble submission, by service or silence,  
No haste, and no worry, impatience or strain.

How precious to know that He goeth before us:  
By faith we can follow, where our eyes may not see,  
Mid doctrines of demons and men, so confusing,  
We hear His voice whisper, "My Child, follow Me."

-- Alfred Easterbrook --

### He Leadeth Me Personally

Not only does our Shepherd Himself lead us, but He leads us personally, or individually. He leadeth me. He does not lead us in groups and clubs, but He leads us as individuals. God's little saints have often had to suffer as a result of this fact. When God wants some special task accomplished He never seeks out a group, a church, or a club to perform it. He finds a Noah, an Abraham, a Joseph, a Moses, a Paul, a Luther, a Wesley, or a Booth whom He can lead out and away from the crowd. Every such divinely directed person has been cruelly branded as a fanatical fool by carnal religion. Many have had to pay off for their supposed foolhardiness by going to prison, to the stake, or else crucified upon unseen crosses. Just as each luminary of the heavens has its own particular path through the illimitable fields of space, so each follower of our Lord has his divinely chosen course. Here we, like Peter, are prone to say, And Lord, what shall this man do?" Jesus' answer is, "What is that to thee? follow thou Me." It is so much more convenient to go with the crowd, but those who follow Christ must take up their cross of being singled out. We are His property therefore have no right to choose our course. It is blessed to leave the choice to Him.

Our Shepherd always leads His sheep in the "paths of righteousness." Any so-called leadings which are contrary to this rule are not of the Lord. Many who have claimed the personal leadership of the Lord have brought disgrace to the subject of divine guidance by their actions which were contrary to the way of righteousness. Some folk have tried to claim that the Lord led them in the matter of taking the companion of another party. This is a shameful lie. The Lord never leads anyone contrary to the truth contained in the Bible. The Lord never leads anyone to split off and make trouble for another chosen worker of God. He never leads anyone along the path of selfishness. He never leads anyone to blacken the name of another by spreading slander, or by

peddling rumors. Let us beware of our words and of our deeds when we testify of the Lord's leadings.

We cannot always see the way by which our Lord leads us. Those who are unprepared to follow except as they can see their way will never go very far with our Shepherd. Abraham followed "not knowing whither he went." It is often dark around us, and disturbing voices call out from the misty shadows which hang low along our trail. The hounds of hell are barking and snapping at our heels, and would devour us if they could. Envy and jealousy stalk in rage along the way. We dare not stop to explain our position, nor to defend our innocence, lest we lose contact with our Leader who ever onward moves.

How strange it seems that the paths of righteousness should be so besieged by beasts of evil design, but so it was with our Shepherd as He, the sinless Son of God walked through the wilderness of this world. Envy, jealousy, slander, hatred, and murderous intent hounded Him on every hand. This came from those from whom He should have received commendation and praise. He was hated most by those to whom He came first to bless. "He came unto His own, and His own received Him not." Christian, of Pilgrim's Progress, traveled this trail with the Saviour-Shepherd, and was likewise assailed by lions and ravenous beasts of the wilderness. He often trembled as He went, but was later comforted to find that these devouring wayside beasts were chained. They could come so near, but no nearer.

How blessed it is to know that the evil design of men and devils can never harm a saint of God who closely follows his Shepherd. "All these things are against me," so we may think and speak, but God says, "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God."

The world's most perfect type of Christ was Joseph. Not a blemish on his character. He, too, was led forth in devious ways by our Shepherd's hand. All his days he walked in paths of righteousness, yet his way was not strewn with flowers. He was hated, dungeoned, and sold as a slave by his jealous brethren; served as slave in the land of darkened Egypt; shamefully tempted and mercilessly lied upon by a vile woman; served years of unjust punishment in a criminal's prison. On and on he went with his Shepherd guide without a natural hopeful way of light. Every earthly support was denied him, and not one person of earth left to whom he could tell his heartaches. Dark and lonely were the many nights spent by this servant of God while exiled from his father and home, and yet he did not falter nor question the judgment of his Shepherd. . The record says, "But God was with Joseph." Repeatedly this word is found. Note the prophetic blessing of Jacob: "Joseph is a fruitful bough even a fruitful bough by a well; whose branches run over the wall. The archers have sorely grieved him, and shot at him, and hated him: but his bow abode in strength, and the arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob; (from thence is the Shepherd, the Stone of Israel:) Even by the God of thy father, who shall help thee; and by the Almighty, who shall bless thee with blessings of heaven above, blessings of the deep that lieth under, blessings of the breasts, and of the womb: the blessings of thy father have prevailed above the blessings of my progenitors unto the utmost bound of the everlasting hills: they shall be on the head of Joseph, and on the crown of the head of him that was separate from his brethren." Gen. 49:22-26.

After the death of Jacob the brethren of Joseph bowed before him in fear, "and Joseph said unto them, Fear not: for am I in the place of God? But as for you, ye thought evil against me: but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive." Note the words, "But God meant it unto good." God always knows how to turn Satan's worst unto the best for us and others.

### For His Name's Sake

There are no idle purposes in the leadings of our Lord. He is leading us for our good, the good of others, and for the praise of His glory -- "For His Name's Sake." The name and honor of our Shepherd is at stake. Should just one of His promises fail for one of the least of His followers, His record would be ruined. He must keep His word. He is honor-bound to work all things for the good of those who love Him. Joshua, the servant of the Lord, had come to the day of his death. The leaders of Israel were present to catch his parting message. He said, "... not one thing hath failed of all the good things which the Lord your God spake concerning you, all are come to pass unto you, and not one thing has failed thereof." Joshua 23:14.

Our Saviour-Shepherd has a particular plan and purpose for each of His sheep, nor is His plan limited to the small space which we call time. He has a plan for us which extends on out in the ages to come. Each of His followers is a part of the eternal plan of God. Oh, that every believer might see this truth and act his part. Suffering saints in every age of the world have played their part in the drama of our eternal King. What, though their part may have been to burn at the stake, be devoured by wild beasts, to be broiled on coals of fire, to have limb torn from limb on the rack, to linger long in dungeons of darkness, to die at the point of the spear, to suffer martyrdom at the hands of cruel savages, or to be martyred by the shameful slander of a poison tongue, our Shepherd turns all to His eternal glory, and to the everlasting good of His saints.

Madame Guyon said, "Many people want to direct God, instead of resigning themselves to be directed by Him. To show Him a way, instead of passively following where He leads."

Our Shepherd sees the end from the beginning and plans accordingly. He faces no emergencies, no accidents, and no surprise attacks from the enemy. Until we learn this truth from experience we are tempted to tremble with fear when we face perplexing problems. Because our Lord makes no demonstration and never becomes illustrated, we are inclined to feel that He has forgotten to care for us when the going is hard. We think that He must do something drastic in the hour of great need. We are wont to say with those other tempest-tried disciples, "Master, carest Thou not that we perish?" If they had believed His words they could not have feared, for He said, "Go to the other side of the lake," not to the middle and drown. Without fear of frustration our Lord has already provided for all the exigencies of our lives.

In the year 1939, I met a beloved Brother in England. He asked me to come to Glasgow on a certain date and to take a certain train from London. At that particular time I was not in position to give an emphatic answer as to whether I could come on that date. The good Brother was to be in another city, so I was to let him know my plans. Later I wrote to him that I could be in Glasgow on the date he had requested, but I was not at all certain that he would be able to get my message before leaving the address he had given to me. On the day appointed I was aboard the train, but

was assailed by Satan that afternoon. My enemy suggested that the message didn't reach the man in time, and even if it did we were not well acquainted with each other, therefore I would be faced with the problem of finding this man in the crowd at the station. In England and Scotland one steps directly from his particular car on to the platform which is level with the floor of the train. My train was a very long one. Where would my friend be in relation to the car I was riding in? Finally I was able to successfully resist Satan in the Name of Jesus, then rested at ease. Upon stepping from my car (here stood my friend, as though he had known what number I would be riding in.

We went together to the home where I was to be entertained. One of the first things in the room to draw my attention was this motto: "HE WILL SILENTLY PLAN FOR THEE." How precious were those words!

"He will silently plan for thee,  
Happy child of a Father's care,  
As though no other claimed His love,  
But thou alone to Him wert dear."

"I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with Mine eyes." Ps. 32.8.

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## Chapter 6 THROUGH THE SHADOWS OF THE VALLEY

"Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death."

All paths of righteousness lead to and through the valley of the shadow of death. There are no royal by-passes.

I would not be dogmatic in saying that in this connection there is no thought of natural death, but I positively do not believe that the Psalmist's main thought was that of physical death. For the saints of God "the dark valley" is this side the gate of death. For God's children, there is no Bible proof that the exit from this world is a "dark valley" in any sense of the word. Elsewhere the Psalmist writes, "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints." Jesus said, "He that liveth and believeth on Me shall never die." Paul speaks of departed saints as those who "sleep in Christ."

The testimonies of thousands who have gone to be with the Lord have given to us no hint of the dark valley idea. When Paul faced Nero's block he said, "The time of my departure is at hand. 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 . . . When Peter was approaching the end, even by cruel crucifixion, according to tradition, he speaks of "putting off this my tabernacle." John Wesley passed through many shaded valleys, but at death he said, "The best of all God is with us." A saintly mother was surrounded by her children as she came to the gate of death. She had supposed there would be a dreadfully dark valley, judging from what she had heard preachers say, but she joyfully exclaimed,

"Children, there is no dark valley here." Someone asked Catherine Booth if the waters of death were deep. Her reply was, "I don't know, for I am not going under, I am going over. Another man of God said to a companion sufferer, both of whom were burning at the stake, "This is our crowning day."

Note the dissimilarity of these testimonies with the "dark valley idea" for passing saints:

Auntie Jordan said, "The chariot is come, and I am ready to step

Dr. Cullen said, "I wish I had the power of writing, I would describe how pleasant it is to die."

John Arthur Lyth said, "Can this be death? Why, it is better than living."

Mrs. Mary Frances exclaimed, "Oh, that I could tell you what joy I possess! I am full of rapture. The Lord doth shine with such power upon my soul. He is come! He is come!"

Another eminent saint of God triumphantly cried, "Victory! Palms of Victory!"

The sainted Fletcher exclaimed, "Satisfied, abundantly satisfied!"

One of God's young servants lay dying. Said his mother tenderly, "Is Jesus with you in the dark valley?"

"Dark valley!" he exclaimed, "It's not dark. It's getting brighter and brighter, Mother." "Oh," said he, "It is so bright now, that I have to shut my eyes!"

As further proof that this "valley of the shadow of death" is not physical death for the sheep of God, we find the presence of "enemies" on the other side of this valley. There are no enemies in heaven. We find "goodness and mercy" still following "all the days of my life," then comes "the house of the Lord."

Let not the children of God go through life with a dread and fear of natural death. Jesus took into His own heart and body the "sting of death" that we might go free. Death for us carries not with it a sting, but a song.

Let not my readers feel that I have done injustice to this great old text. It is an established fact that nearly all of us have associated these words with eternity's border land, but why should we have done so? The sheep's journey with the Shepherd does not end here. The text is in the center of the Psalm. It speaks of the "shadow of death" -- death in its dark and doleful meaning. It is only the "shadow," but even the shadow of death in its dreadful sense is no minor affair. Death in its dreadful sense no saint of God shall ever know, but there shall be shadows plenty, and they shall come to us long before we reach eternity's border.

It is readily understood that in the world where Satan is the prince he will see to it that the sheep of God cannot slip through on flowery beds of ease. The denizens of darkness are sworn

enemies of the Good Shepherd and His sheep. No soul passes through this world and into heaven conveniently and easily. Those who follow our Lord must count the cost before the journey is begun. However, we should not get the notion that Satan's will alone is being executed by our valley experiences. Satan wills to oppress us and destroy us amid the darkness, but our Shepherd has other designs for us. Our Lord may permit Satan to do his worst toward us, but his worst is limited. As in the case of Job, so it is with us. The devil can go so far, but no farther. The marvel is that in every event Satan's worst shall turn to God's best for us. Joseph's dungeon led to his throne. The three Hebrew boys' furnace led to their promotion. God's way up is down. The shadows of the valley lead to the sun-kissed mountain peaks. Jesus' humiliation and shameful death, borne voluntarily for our sakes, led to "the joy that was set before Him" the redemption of the world from Satan's bondage, and to His, our Lord's, exaltation which exceeds that of the highest archangel of the heavens. Our bitterest crosses lead to our brightest crowns. "If we suffer, we shall also reign with Him ... In reality those who draw back from the most dreadful shadows of some deep valley are actually drawing back from the highest honors of eternal glory. Satan would not have us see this truth at all; but even though we may see the truth and rejoice in it while residing in the sunshine, Satan will be on hand to blot it from our minds, if possible, as we enter the death shades of the desert.

No temptation comes to us but such as is common to man, but while in the deep darkness of some heart-hurting experience we are tempted to believe that no other person on earth has known such a test, and that we shall never be able to come through triumphant.

Let us not lose sight of the exact words here: "Yea, though I walk through the valley Note that the testing place is the place of walking. As a young preacher, some years ago, I decided to rearrange a great text in order to put it in better homiletical order. The text is found in Isaiah 40:31: "But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint." I got the idea that it would be best to speak of walking first, running second, and flying third. The Holy Ghost revealed to me that He knew more about homiletics than I did. Flying is pleasant and easy going, running is not such a slow gait, but walking is rather a trial to those whose natures are geared high. The valley of testing is the place of plodding. Young believers delight in soaring, and our Lord often grants this luxury to them, provided they are truly spiritual. This is a spiritual luxury which we all like, but it takes more faith to be faithful in practical running, than in soaring; then more faith and courage to plod over rugged steeps and through dark valleys than are required in running. The New Testament also speaks of "standing." Only those who are made of real soldier stuff are prepared to stand when the fight is stiff.

Look again at this word -- "through" -- not into the shadows to be defeated and destroyed, but there is a triumphal exit where the light is shining on the other side. This walk with the Shepherd through the ghastly shadows of the valley constitute our training school of faith. Faith grows in the storm and in the shadows. Here is where we unlearn many things which we supposed we knew, and learn what we had never known. It is in the deep night shades that faith comes to full fruition. Here sight cannot function, therefore we are shut up to faith alone in our ever present Guide. It is while passing through the valley that our Lord becomes infinitely nearer to us. Until now the Psalmist has spoken of the Shepherd in the third person, but as he enters the shadows he draws nearer and says, "Thou art with me." This is the place where we make love to our Lord and

want Him ever near. In the darkness He becomes more intimate and our love increases more rapidly. Here we die to great emotions and to special sensational thrills. It is no longer the blessing we crave, but the Blesser; not His gifts, but the Giver Himself. We lose sight of the tinsel of things and rejoice only in knowing that our Shepherd is near.

### I Will Fear No Evil

This word of boasting is not the fruit of our own will power, and our stiff fight against fear, but it is because He is near. David said, "My soul shall make her boast in the Lord." We are safe only because of His presence and care. "Though an host should encamp against me, my heart shall not fear: though war should rise against me, in this will I be confident." Ps. 27:3. Our Shepherd admonishes us not to fear, and gives us precious promises which should relieve us of all fear. "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." Is. 41:10. "When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee; when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee." Is. 43:2.

A little boy stepped out into the darkness with his father. He drew up close to his father, and with his small hand secure in that of his parent's hand, he rather boastfully remarked, "Daddy, I am not afraid of bears." The big bear of fear does not trouble us when we are sure that our Shepherd is near. Faith in His absolute care will eliminate fear from our hearts. When we truly fear the Lord, and love Him with burning hearts, there is none other to fear.

### LET ME TRUST

Let me trust Thee, when shadows are darkest,  
As alone through the valley I go.  
Let me rest in the word Thou hast spoken:  
Deep waters shall not overflow.

When pressed by the foe in the conflict,  
Let me prove that Thy promise is true;  
Let me look for the rift in the storm cloud,  
And the light of Thy love shining through.

Let me tell how my fetters were broken,  
At the touch of Thy nail-pierced hands;  
Of the peace that still flows like a river,  
And of grace that has caused me to stand.

Let me sing with a heart filled with gladness,  
Of the joy that doth ever increase;  
Let me trust Thee for power to proclaim it,  
The message of pardon and peace.

Let me wait on my Lord in the stillness,  
Until His sweet voice I can hear,  
And then, in the strength that He gives me,  
Unfettered by doubt or by fear,

Let me rise up on wings like an eagle,  
In the power of Thy wonderful Name.  
Let me sing all the days of my journey,  
Of the Lamb that for sinners was slain.

-- Alfred Easterbrook --

If you are in the deep shadows because of some strange, mysterious providence, do not be afraid. Simply go on in faith and love, never doubting. God is watching and He will bring good and beauty out of all your pain and tears. -- J. R. Miller

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## Chapter 7 COMFORTS OF HIS ROD AND STAFF

"Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me."

David never loses sight of the Shepherd all through his wonderful song. Comfort here stands for protection, peace, preservation, strength, and assurance in the hard places of life. If we were left to our own strength and wisdom we would be overcome and destroyed. There is no place of safety except in the Shepherd's care.

By means of His rod He beats back the evil powers which threaten us. Mighty wonders on land and sea have been accomplished by the rod of God. Our Saviour-Shepherd may select a very ordinary instrument to serve as His rod, but it will serve both Him and us well. His own power passes into this common instrument, just as the "rod" of Moses became the might of God. It became a devouring serpent and swallowed up the rods of the magicians. This same stick from the desert became the instrument in the hand of Moses by which God rolled back the waters of the Red Sea and delivered Israel. By this rod streams of water flowed in the desert.

The rod of our Shepherd prevails in every battle. The rod is an instrument of sovereignty. Our Sovereign-Shepherd rules over all. In our day when men's hearts are failing them for fear of those things which are coming upon the earth, the saints of God can rest in confidence that their Shepherd-King is overruling the governments of this world, and can be assured that the kingdoms of this world shall soon become the kingdoms of their Lord and Master.

The rod stands for correction, but even the chastening of our Shepherd is not void of comfort. Saints have learned that succeeding each correction from the Shepherd's rod, fresh and sweet revelations of His love and grace speedily follow. Someone has said, "I was almost glad to

receive the whippings which my father gave us, just to receive and enjoy the special caresses and expressions of deep love which always followed."

Chastening assures us that we are yet the subjects of our Shepherd's love. "For whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth." Heb. 12:6. Chastisement does not always indicate that the sheep of God are wayward. We are told that this word actually means "Child-training." Even our sinless Saviour was put to grief, and "learned obedience by the things which He suffered."

"Now chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby." Heb. 12:11. In view of the afterward the sheep of God can even "joy in tribulation."

Unlike the complaining woman who said, "When I feel the best, I feel the worst, knowing how bad I'll feel when I feel bad again," we should say, "We feel the best when we feel the worst, knowing how good we shall feel when the chastisement has ended."

Some of us who belonged to the order of better days (days wherein parents ruled their children rather than being ruled by them) learned a valuable lesson concerning chastisement. Instead of drawing back we discovered that if we would draw close up to the correcting parent the licks would not be nearly so hard.

"As many as I love I rebuke and chasten." Rev. 3:19.

The shepherd's staff is used to count the sheep at the close of the day when they pass through the door of the sheep fold. He who counteth the hosts of heaven, and calleth them all by their names, counteth His blood-bought sheep, and numbereth even the hairs of their heads. No loving mother ever cared for her child with the love and deep concern which our Shepherd knows. He forgets not the minutest interests of those who love Him.

The staff is used by the shepherd to rescue the sheep which is caught in thorns, or has slipped and fallen to some hazardous point at the verge of a yawning chasm.

You, dear saint of God, may be caught in some tormenting thistle where all hope appears to be in vain. Despair not, for thy Shepherd knoweth thy sad plight and will come to your rescue on schedule. He is never late for those who trust in His care. Some sad disaster may have struck, or through no fault of your own you may be suspended over some dreadful precipice without a beam of hope in sight. Despair not, for the Shepherd's long and loving reach shall rescue you in time. His staff may not appear in the manner we think, but it is His nevertheless. It may be a song, a sermon, a kind word, a prayer, a promise from the precious Book, or some unexpected act of providence, but it is our Shepherd's staff.

The staff also stands for support, or something to lean upon in the time of weariness. Our loving Shepherd shares His staff with us and supports us in times of sorrow or trial. This staff may well stand for the unfailing precious promises of the Bible. What a staff to lean upon! Men's promises may fail, but the promises of our Lord can never fail. His Word is a rock which will

never quake. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but His Word never. This is our staff now, shall be our staff in the darkest night, shall be our comforting support at eternity's border, and shall be our stay in the ages yet to come. How great is this staff! Let us make much of it: read it, meditate upon it, believe it with simple faith, practice it in our daily lives, then rest upon it when earth and all that is mortal is receding. "Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me."

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## Chapter 8 OUR SERVANT -- SHEPHERD SPREADS A TABLE

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

The long night of darkness has disappeared, and the light of day has dawned. The sheep has passed safely through the ghostly shades of the valley, and has emerged with victory through the Shepherd's might. The night prowlers of the wilderness lost their desired prey. The arch-enemy failed to foil the sheep of God. The fast is broken by a royal feast prepared by an unexpected servant -- our Sovereign-Shepherd -- and in a most unlikely place -- "in the presence of mine enemies." God has unusual surprises for His saints who leave the cares of life to Him, and live in a state of joyful expectancy. The buoyancy of anticipated mercies keeps us from sinking beneath the threatening waves of darkness, and from being swallowed up by the monsters of life's sea. For the sheep of God the best is always just ahead. The night is on, but "the morning cometh." "Ye sorrow now, but ye shall rejoice." "For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face." "Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning." "We sow in tears," "we shall reap in joy."

Cheer up, ye saints of God, "The clouds you so much dread are big with mercy, and shall break with blessings upon your head." The famine you fear shall suddenly be replaced with a feast of fat things.

Unbelief says, "Can God furnish a table in the wilderness?" This is exactly what He did, and can do again. May God help us to release the pent-up bounties of His grace by breaking the bands of our unbelief. Let us expect great and mighty things of our Saviour-Shepherd, even if He must bring them about in an unusual manner. He is the God of the unusual.

Toiling through the night the unsuccessful fishermen faced the break of day wet, weary, and hungry, with no food in sight. Yonder on the shore stood -- perhaps an early customer. "Children, have you any meat?" said the visitor. They answered Him, "No." And He said unto them, "Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and ye shall find." They cast therefore, and now they were not able to draw it in for the multitude of fishes. They found, and now the secret was out. Upon their arrival at the shore they found that their Saviour-Shepherd had a feast prepared of fish they had not caught, and of bread the village baker had not baked.

On other occasions our Lord prepared a spread in the desert place. Let God be God that He may strengthen our faith by surprising us with the unusual. The crime of modern religion is that of trying to put God in a rut. Sectarian stereotype would take all the surprises out of faith. What is it

to us if the Lord wills to feed his servant with "bread and flesh" brought in the beaks of ravens, or with pleasant cakes cooked from flour taken at the bottom of a widow's barrel?

### In The Presence of Mine Enemies

Our Lord loves to work wonders for His saints in the presence of their foes. He loves to prove Himself strong in behalf of those whose hearts are perfect toward Him. Our enemies who accuse, and would put us to shame, are put to shame in our presence, if we will permit our Lord to fight our battles. Nothing incites our Lord to action more than the challenge of our enemies against the faith of His saints.

A mighty famine prevailed in Israel. The enraged king wished to lay the blame on Elisha, the man of God. The king said, "God do so and more also to me, if the head of Elisha the son of Shaphat shall stand on him this day." The murderous king sent his messenger of death to take the prophet of God. Then Elisha said, "Hear ye the word of the Lord; thus said the Lord, tomorrow about this time shall a measure of fine flour be sold for a shekel, and two measures of barley for a shekel, in the gate of Samaria. Then a lord on whose hand the king leaned answered the man of God, and said, Behold, if the Lord would make windows in heaven, might this thing be? And he said, Behold, thou shalt see it with thine eyes, but shalt not eat thereof." II Kings 6:31; 7:1, 2.

By an extraordinary miracle wrought in the providence of God, the thing came to pass as the man of God had spoken, but the blasphemer was trampled to death by the crowd who came to purchase food.

Our Saviour-Shepherd had fasted and prayed during the long night of His wilderness temptation. He withstood Satan and remained in the place of testing until the Father's time was fulfilled. The angels came and spread a feast for Him in the presence of the slinking Satan.

Some would have us believe that the metaphor of sheep is dropped at this point, but Orientals contend that this is not the case. The word here for table means, "that which is spread out." Out from the darkness of the valley and in the face of vicious foes the good shepherd leads his sheep to a table land of tender grass. He prepares the table by going before and driving away lurking reptiles and crouching beasts.

Ere long our Servant-Shepherd shall appear in the glory of His kingdom. Then He shall gird Himself and serve His saints at the banquet of the Marriage Supper where the sorrows and sighs of the yester-years shall be forever forgotten in the Father's House of abounding plenty.

"He is the God of boundless resources. The only limit is in us. Our asking, our thinking, our praying are too small; our expectations are too limited. He is trying to lift us up to a higher conception, and lure us on to a mightier expectation and appropriation. Oh, shall we put Him in derision? There is no limit to what we may ask and expect of our glorious El-Shaddai; and there is but one measure here given for His blessing; and that is "according to the power that worketh in us." -- A. B. Simpson

"Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labor of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls: yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation." Hab. 3:17,18.

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## Chapter 9 THE ANOINTING AND THE OVERFLOW

"Thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over."

In the divine economy there is no stagnation, no stinginess, no rationing, and no lack. Every emergency is foreseen and amply provided for. If we experience anything to the contrary it is not our Shepherd's fault.

The oriental makes much of the anointing oil. This is true of the herdsman as well as the householder. It is the soothing balm for most ills. The thorn-torn head of the weary sheep is freely anointed with the healing unguent as it passes the shepherd at the door of the fold. How refreshing and rejuvenating was the anointing by the hand of the loving shepherd.

Oil is a type of the blessed Holy Spirit. For the service of the tabernacle God provided the priests with a formula for anointing oil which, under penalty of death, was not to be compounded or used except for sacred service. "Upon man's flesh shall it not be poured." It was not in any sense to be simulated.

God has provided that every child of His may have free access to the blessed Holy Spirit's anointing. This is not for the world. Concerning the Holy Spirit, Jesus said, "Whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him: but ye know Him; for He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you." Paul speaks of the "renewing of the Holy Ghost; which He shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour. Titus 3:5, 6. Like all other promises of this psalm, this anointing is for God's sheep alone. It is not confined, however, to God's great men, or to pastors, or evangelists, or apostles and prophets. It is the privilege of every saint, and none can be at his best for God without this. No preacher, teacher, or singer can please God and bring blessing to His people and to the world without this.

Someone asked an old, and unlettered colored preacher to explain the meaning of the Spirit's unction. He replied, "I se can't tell you what it is, but I showly knows what it ain't." The congregation also knows what this anointing is not. The most illiterate man, under the anointing of the Holy Spirit, can preach a better Gospel than can the most brilliant scholar without the anointing. Sad was the day for the church of the Lord Jesus Christ when scholasticism and natural eloquence was substituted for the anointing of the Holy Spirit. Men may know how to make speeches without the anointing of the Spirit, but they do not know how to preach without it.

Jesus said, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He hath anointed Me to preach the Gospel Lk. 4:18. John, in writing to the children of God, said, "But the anointing which you have

received of Him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in Him." I John 2:27.

This anointing produces a freshness and vitality of spirit which nothing else can do. It prevents fretting, fuming, and friction. It produces beauty and refinement of character, and creates fragrance and fruitfulness in the life of the believer. What miserable substitutes are learning and formal ceremonies for the power and anointing of the Holy Spirit.

The promise of the Holy Spirit is for every believer. (Acts 2:38). This glorious gift is assured to all who ask in sincerity and act in obedience. (Lk. 11:13; Acts 5:32). Without this anointing no person is a Christian in a biblical sense. The meaning of Christ is "the anointed One." The meaning of Christians is "the anointed ones." Even the only begotten Son of God must have the anointing of the Spirit. How much more we, the lesser sons, stand in need of this promised gift of the "holy oil!"

Divine Shepherd, hear our prayer today for this promised anointing, as we bow our heads and bare our hearts in Thy hallowed presence. Fill us now, dear Lord, and make our barren lives fragrantly fresh and flourishingly fruitful, that Thy Name may be glorified.

### Overflowing Fullness

"My cup runneth over." A personal experience of fullness, but how infinitely small in comparison to that fullness which is promised by our Saviour-Shepherd to the believers of the Holy Ghost dispensation. "He that believeth on Me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (But this spake He of the Spirit, which they that believe on Him should receive ... )" John 7:38,39. Here we have rivers of living water contrasted with David's cup. The overflowing cup of cold water given to the weary sheep at the close of the day is sufficient as a metaphor, but "that Great Shepherd of the sheep" has bigger and better things for us if we w211 only trust Him.

How sad and shameful is the fact that we who profess to be the sheep of God go leanly through life -- undernourished, unanointed, and unwatered -- while the Saviour-Shepherd has prepared for us a feast of fat things, if we will only come, eat and drink.

How sad that professed Christians must turn to the world to find a cheap sort of entertainment and unsatisfying pleasure. Little wonder that the people of the world are not interested in our religious profession. Spiritual stagnation is uninviting, and is a disgrace to the name of Christianity.

"Come unto Me and drink," says our Shepherd. And again, "But whosoever drinketh of 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." The paltry pleasures of the world have nothing to offer which is in any way comparable to the clear, clean, soul-satisfying pleasures which our Lord gives. Some foolish folk would say, "This may be true, but we will sip at the cisterns of sin's pleasures now, then turn later to the Fountain of Life." Stupid folly! Such are eternal losers even if

they should later break with the world's ways and come to Christ. They can never be what they might have been. They can never plumb the depths of love and grace which they might have known. They sustain losses which shall never be regained. Eternal treasures have passed them up and shall never be captured. Come sinner, and come now. Weep your way to faith in our Saviour-Shepherd, and drink from His well of living water. Come, thou timid sheep; come near to your Shepherd and let Him refresh your soul with rivers of living water and make you as a well-watered garden -- yea, as "a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season. "I am come, said the Good Shepherd, "that they (His sheep), might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." Anything short of this abundant life, abounding in fruitfulness, does dishonor to our Shepherd-King.

"Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be My disciples." John 15:8.

"The righteous shall flourish like the Palm tree: he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon." They shall still bring forth fruit in old age; they shall be fat and flourishing." Ps. 92:1 2, 14.

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## Chapter 10 HEDGED ABOUT

"Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life." "As the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so the Lord is round about His people, henceforth and for ever. " Evan Satan, the father of liars, sometimes tells the truth. "Hast thou not made an hedge about him," said Satan, concerning Job.

The sheep of God are hedged about by the Shepherd's loving care. He leads the way, while "goodness and mercy" bring up the rear. It has been suggested that "goodness and mercy" represent two faithful dogs who follow at the heels of the sheep, thus protecting them from the rear. Some speak of "goodness and mercy" as angels of God who guard the sheep from rear attacks while the Shepherd leads them onward. The latter thought is not a far-fetched fancy, for the same writer says, "The angel of the Lord campeth round about them that fear Him, and delivereth them." Ps. 34:7.

Goodness and mercy are always near in the paths of righteousness, and in the time of great need they are obviously manifest. Moses followed the Lord up rugged Sinai. There the Lord stood with His faithful servant in the shadows, and said, "The Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth." David said, "Taste and see that the Lord is good. " Paul speaks of the riches of God's goodness.

David had much to say about the mercy of God. "I trust in the mercy of God for ever and ever. " Ps. 52:8. "Thy mercy is great above the heavens." Ps. 108:4. "The earth is full of Thy mercy. Ps. 119:64. Hosea admonishes men to "Sow to yourselves in righteousness, reap in mercy. Paul speaks of God as "The Father of mercy, " and of His being "rich in mercy."

"Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me. " There Is another reason why we can be sure of goodness and mercy following us. Our Lord said, "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy. We may also say, "Blessed are the good, for they shall obtain goodness. This is an eternal law -- the law of "sowing and reaping." What we measure to others is measured back to us. The paths of righteousness include both passive and active righteousness -- being good and doing good. Such deeds of goodness and mercy shall follow us all the days of our lives -- coming back to us in the same measure, but with big interest -- "heaped up and running over." "Oh, how great is Thy goodness, which Thou has laid up for them that fear Thee; which Thou hast wrought for them that trust in Thee before the sons of men! Thou shalt hide them in the secret of Thy presence from the pride of man; Thou shalt keep them secretly in a pavilion from the strife of tongues." Ps. 31:19, 20.

"Yet Thou in Thy manifold mercies forsookest them not in the wilderness: the pillar of the cloud departed not from them by day, to lead them in the way; neither the pillar of fire by night, to show them light, and the way wherein they should go. Thou gavest also Thy good spirit to instruct them, and withheldest not Thy manna from their mouth, and gavest them water for their thirst." Nehemiah 9:19, 20.

He giveth more grace when the burdens grow greater,  
He sendeth more strength when the labors increase;  
To added affliction He addeth His mercies,  
To multiplied trials His multiplied peace.

When we have exhausted our store of endurance,  
When our strength has failed ere the day is half done,  
When we reach the end of our hoarded resources,  
Our Father's full giving is only begun.

His love has no limit, His grace has no measure,  
His power no boundary known unto men;  
For out of His infinite riches in Jesus,  
He giveth and giveth and giveth again.

-- Annie Johnson Flint --

#### THE END OF THE PILGRIM PATHWAY

".... And I shall dwell in the house of the Lord for ever."

My last lines of this little book are pared specially for two classes -- the seasoned saint who is nearing the end of the earthly trail, and now, with most of the road in the rear, is scanning the hilltops for the first glow of the lights of home; and for the young pilgrim who has likewise heard the Shepherd's call, counted the cost, and is now on the way.

True, it is best to forget most of the things which are behind and to give our full attention to the climb which lies ahead of us. for we are not yet home. It is, however, sometimes good for us to

be reminded of "the pit from which we were digged, and of the dangers of the trail from which we have been delivered." These remembrances will not weaken the steps of the weary sheep as he nears the "better country," nor will they frighten the lambs who have learned to love the voice of the Good Shepherd who is leading them out and onward.

You, too, my fellow pilgrim, and the beloved friend of our Shepherd true, remember when you first heard the call of His voice to leave all and to follow Him. It seems but as yesterday when in the yester-years you made your noble choice and took that brave step to follow the Master into the unknown.

The steps of those who love His Name  
And feed upon His Word,  
Who in the stillness learn to wait,  
Until His voice is heard;  
Who sit and wait at Jesus' feet,  
Their Master's will to know,  
Their every step shall ordered be,  
Wheresoever they may go.

They shall not go in haste or flight,  
But only as He leads,  
Just for today He bids them pray;  
Not for tomorrow's needs.  
With food and raiment be content,  
The treasures that He bids thee seek  
Are of eternal worth.

Who feeds the birds that fly above,  
Without a thought or care?  
Who gives the beauty to the rose,  
And paints the lily fair?  
Who but thy Lord, who longs to make  
Thy cleansed heart His throne,  
Who calls His chosen one apart  
To walk with Him alone?

Their steps are ordered by the Lord,  
He leads them where He will,  
Gethsemane, the judgment hall,  
And dark Golgotha's hill;  
For they are crucified with Christ,  
No other lord they own,  
For Christ in them is magnified,  
Their heart His Royal Throne.

-- Alfred Easterbrook --

How precious those days, after having farewelled from family and friends, as you, like Abraham, followed your Lord out into the fields of the unseen future. He led you along devious paths out into His green pastures of pleasantness and plenty. You walked with Him by the side of restful waters where you reveled in the delights of His love. Days came and went when it seemed that you were almost as a bird on wing, without a weight and without a care. Upon hearing the older sheep of God speak of trials and triumphs, you were slow to understand. All you knew may have seemed as triumphs without the trials. Perhaps your strongest temptation was to wonder, if, after all, that tested saint really knew His Lord as you knew Him.

Onward our Saviour-Shepherd gently led you, through sweet experiences of His abundant grace, until you, too, could say with the psalmist shepherd, . "He restoreth my soul. " You sang H's praise and rejoiced in the pardoning and cleansing power of the "blood of the Lamb." Wave upon wave of glory and blessing swept over your enraptured soul. You sang, "Tell me not of heavy crosses, nor of burdens hard to bear." You were born, as it were, upon eagle's wings. Up and up you soared, above the mountain tops, and bathed your soul in the brightness of heaven's sunlight. This was no foolish fancy. It was real -- unspeakably real. What He made real to you, He wills to make real to every soul who is willing to heed His voice and abandon his life wholly into the Saviour-Shepherd's care. "He restoreth my soul." Glory, and Honor, and Praise be unto His Name for ever.

You, my pilgrim friend, will recall that day when your faithful Shepherd seemed to say: "My beloved, we have hitherto walked together in green pastures, and rested by the side of pleasant waters, and you have soared in the heavens, but henceforth we must walk together farther afield. Life is more than heavenly pleasures, and to follow Me means more than entrancing thrills of the highest order. I haven chosen you that you may know Me and that you may serve Me in the hard places of life, and that you may serve your fellow creatures in your day. You and I must go where they are -- out upon the rugged ways of life. Joy you shall have always, and My presence shall be with you; but the path in which I shall lead you is not always a pleasant one, and the fields through which we shall walk shall not always be gloriously green. We will climb together the rugged steeps, shall descend together into the deep shades of the valley, and shall be misunderstood and hated together by the citizens of the country through which we travel. You shall be tempted sorely, and shall be made to tremble on the brink of deep and dark waters, and Satan will sift you, but My all-sufficient grace shall ever be yours. I shall ever go before you, and where I have triumphed you can dare to tread. We shall walk together in the sunshine and in the shadows. We shall suffer together, weep together, work together, rejoice together, and the blow which strikes you shall always be Mine. We shall go through the valley together and shall feast together on the other side. I shall not only be your Shepherd-Companion to guide and protect you, but I shall be your Servant, and will provide richly for you in the very presence of your accusing foes. I shall anoint your weary head with the oil of My grace, strengthen your fainting heart with the balm of My love, and your cup shall overflow with the abundant fullness of My Spirit. I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. Thou shalt have no want. My goodness and My mercy shall follow thee all the days of thy life as I lead thee onward, upward, and homeward -- into My Father's House, that where I am you shall forever be. Arise, let us go hence."

You remember, I say, that day, and you remember other days along the homeward trail. It would take volumes to record the experiences of the road, and some you wish not to remember.

You doubtless recall that stunning blow which struck your soul like a sudden squall on the ocean dropping from the unknown upon the unwary seamen. "Can it be true?" may have been your thoughts aloud. You remember well that the thing you didn't feel could come had come; and great though it was, it was only the beginning of the mighty tempests of your pilgrim journey with your Shepherd. Since that first big blow you have experienced heart-bleeding blows without number. Temptations have fiercely assailed you, and some of these may have left you with obvious scars. At times you, like Peter, have called upon your Saviour-Shepherd to save you from sinking beneath dark and angry waves. Violent pain and perplexing problems have sometimes been your lot. The tunes of your songs in the night were begotten by the tears of some great grief. Sorrows strange and strong may have cut deep canyons through your bewildered soul. Fiery trials may have tested you to the very limits of your powers of endurance, and your patience has sometimes been tried by every scheme of earth and hell.

Some of your dearest friends have misunderstood your motives, and have even believed the slanderous lies of others who turned against you. You have been spurned by these onetime friends as though you were some evil thing. Raging lions of furious mien have deafened your senses with their thunderous roar. Bears of wildest fear have stealthily sneaked through the shadows of your most dreadful nights, and have blown their blanching breaths upon your fevered face. Along the homeward trail you may have been attacked by every ferocious fiend of the wilds. Little dogs of envy and jealousy may have hounded you at every step -- and may yet be hounding you. Grizzly ghosts of the buried past may flaunt their ghastly figures before your face, accusing you of acts long covered by the blood of the Lamb. In the double darkness of natural night and some giant grief you may have been tempted to believe that your Shepherd-Friend has forgotten to stay near. Your fears are unfounded. A mother may forget her child, but our loving Shepherd can never forget you. He is ever near while leading you onward and homeward.

It is a touching story -- that of a father and little daughter who were bereft of a companion and mother. The brokenhearted father held the hand of his wondering child and stood by the grave as kind friends tenderly lowered the remains of that precious wife and loving mother into the cold earth. When the last rites were spoken and flowers were laid on the newly-made mound, sorrowing friends came insisting that the heavy-hearted pair go with them rather than return to the darkness of a home void of companion and mother. The sorrowing man declined the kind invitation saying, "Sooner or later we must return, so it is better that we face our grief now.

Upon their arrival at the home the little four-year-old ran through the house looking for mother. Neither the father nor his child cared for food, so both turned to their beds at an early hour. The flaxen-haired darling was carefully tucked in her bed which was near to that of her father. The man was wide awake -- stunned by his grief. With a heaving heart and weeping eyes he petitioned His Heavenly Father for the needed grace for this dark hour. Long after his baby should have been asleep the little one said, "Daddy, are you there?" "Yes, darling," exclaimed the father, "daddy is right here close to you. It is late now, so you must go to sleep." Sometime later the little voice spoke out again, "Daddy, it is so dark: I never knew it so dark, but you are there, aren't you daddy?" Upon this saying the fond father lifted his child into his own bed and caressed her to

sleep. He then took up his baby's cry and lifted his voice to God. "Father, it is so dark: I never knew it so dark, but you are near, aren't you Father?" (Only those who have gone through a similar experience can know the reality of such darkness) . The comforting grace of the Heavenly Shepherd brought strength and courage to his sorrowing soul, until he could say with David, "He giveth his beloved sleep." The night is never too dark for the Shepherd to be near.

You have traveled far and long over the Shepherd's trail. Many have been your victories -- sometimes at severe costs. You may have had some slips and falls along the path, but I would admonish you to despair not for these regretful failures. It is enough to know that you are now trailing near in the Shepherd's steps. Perhaps a few more days -- or even years -- of trials and triumphs, of toil and tears, of sorrow and song, of sunshine and shadow, and then -- Home, Heavenly Home. How soul-inspiring is this old and familiar word "home." Few words in our language are so meaningful as this one. To some of us it seems strangely sad that so many of the languages of earth have no word which expresses the deep sentiments of our English word home. Home is more than a humble cottage, and more than an imposing palace. It is more than a shelter and a place to eat and sleep. It is more than fine furnishings within and spacious courts without. It is a place of love, law, and liberty; the place of consolation and companionship; the abode of fond parents, brothers, and sisters, and all that is dearest to us on earth. What a vacancy in the life of the poor unfortunate soul who has never known the true meaning of the word home.

With many of us the "old homestead," or the "old home place," is something of the past, but not forgotten. So long as our material body and immaterial soul are joined together, and our minds even moderately function, we can never forget our old home place of our younger years. Neither the pen of the writer nor the brush of the painter can match the picture which hangs upon the wall of memory. The very thought of those faded years and their relation to the old home is enough to melt the hardest heart and to stain the face which is long unaccustomed to tears. Such sobering thoughts tempt us to say with the poet, "Turn backward, turn backward, O time, in your flight; and make me a child again just for tonight." But time will not heed our childish cry. It goes onward and we are carried along at its pace. The old home is behind us, the new home is before us. The home temporal is but a shadow (a sweet and memorable shadow), of the Home eternal.

It is true that some of the things known in and about the old home place will be absent in our New Sweet Home. The old house will not be there with its mossy roof and log walls, or of roughly sawed lumber. The old hearth with its light and warmth will be lacking, for there is no cold in our New Home, and the Lamb is the light thereof. The old family doctor with his pill bag will not be there, for disease shall never enter our door. No crepe shall hang without and the dreaded casket shall never enter our room, for there is no death there. Mother's old apron shall never again dry our weeping eyes, for God Himself shall wipe away all tears from our eyes. The bed of the invalid and the bed of pain shall not be there, "for the former things are passed away."

All the best things of earth and all the good things of that New Best Home shall be there. Every father and mother, son and daughter, sister and brother, husband and wife who were lovers of our Lord and followed His leadings shall be there -- not one missing. Love, light, life, joy, peace, health, happiness, holiness, wisdom, beauty, companionship, and fellowship shall be present in our New Home. God's great people and humble people of all ages shall be among our acquaintances and near neighbors, yea, more, our brothers and sisters, of the Heavenly Home.

Those who were the nearest and dearest to us while we traveled the earthly trail shall be nearer and dearer still in the New Home. Best of all we shall behold with our eyes the One whom we have sightlessly followed and lovingly served during our earthly pilgrimage. In the light of that one expression, "And they shall see HIS FACE," we can joyfully serve, suffer, and by faith follow Him through the shadows until the lights of Heaven and Home shine upon our ending trail.

Some years ago a remarkable incident occurred at a wedding in England.

A young man of large wealth and high social position, who had been blinded by an accident when he was ten years old, and who won University honors in spite of his blindness, had won a beautiful bride, though he had never looked upon her face. A little while before his marriage, he submitted to a course of treatment by experts, and the climax came on the day of his wedding.

The bride, Miss Cave, entered the church on the arm of her white-haired father, the admiral, who was all decked out in the blue and lace of the quarter-deck. So moved was she that she could hardly speak. Was her lover at last to see her face that others admired, but which he knew only through his delicate finger tips?

As she neared the altar, while the soft strains of the wedding march floated through the church, her eyes fell on a strange group.

Sir William Hart Dyke stood there with his son. Before the latter was the great oculist in the act of cutting away the last bandage. William Montague Dyke took a step forward, with the spasmodic uncertainty of one who cannot believe that he is awake. A beam of rose-colored light from a pane in the chancel window fell across his face, but he did not seem to see it.

Did he see anything? Yes! Recovering in an instant his steadiness of mien, and with a dignity and joy never before seen in his face, he went forward to meet his bride. They looked into each other's eyes, and one would have thought that his eyes would never wander from her face.

"At last!" she said. "At last!" he echoed solemnly, bowing his head. That was a scene of great dramatic power, and no doubt of great joy, and is but a mere suggestion of what will actually take place in heaven when the Christian who has been walking through this world of trial and sorrow, shall see HIM face to face. -- Selected.

"For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face ....

Fear not, young pilgrims, to follow your Saviour-Shepherd all the way. He promises you not sunshine without shadows, brilliant skies with no gray days, glory with no grief, pleasure with no pain, songs with no sorrows, nor triumphs without trials. He does promise strength for the day, songs in the night, roses with your thorns, victory over every foe, and His presence all the way. Others have won the race and have found an everlasting abode in the house of the Lord. So can you. Forward, forward until you plant your weary feet in your Father's House at the end of the trail. Did I say the end? I am wrong. Yes, the end of the trail of time, but eternity's trail will have just

begun. With our Shepherd we shall go onward and upward and outward over celestial fields of endless glory. Home at last! for with Him 'tis Home Sweet Home. Eternal HOME.

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THE END