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SERMON OF THE SHEEP

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John F. Dorsey has donated some of his publications to HDM, among which was this
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on our CDs. Those who appreciate good, old-fashioned, second-blessing holiness books will
recognize his works as among such. -- DVM

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INTRODUCTION

One who strives for the mastery in the ministry desires and will accept help he can get to
make him a better minister. Any minister no matter how long he has been in the ministry, will be
greatly helped by carefully reading the booklet on sheep. It is unique, enlightening and challenging.

R. G. Flexon

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**I.
SERMON OF THE SHEEP**

Seven years ago I acquired a few head of sheep to keep the brush and briars in check around our place. During the time since then they have been preaching to me -- mostly in silence, but no less effectively because of that.

After listening to their preaching for seven years and considering it at length I have begun to understand God's wisdom in selecting leaders like Moses and David who had first been shepherds of the sheep. I am afraid that many a modern church has succumbed to the idea that all a leader needs is a college education, a nice appearance, a pleasing personality and the disposition to try to please everyone, It is probably true that he would be a better shepherd if he had one time had an intimate firsthand acquaintance with a flock of sheep and lambs. This metaphor of people being sheep is not a chance illustration of our Lord, but occurs frequently in the Bible and even in the book of Revelation Christ is spoken of as "The Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. Paul warns the Christians as sheep to "Beware of Dogs" and John the Revelator hears the pronouncement "Outside the gates of the City are dogs, etc."

The third time I used part of this exposition as a message was for the evangelism service at our 1962 Conference of the Ohio Conference of the Wesleyans. There were many requests that I put it into print. Here it is in a little more detail than I ever used it before. If I have left out parts it is because I had only brief notes from which to work.

1

Sheep are clean animals -- the cleanest of the clean.

They will carefully pick their way around muck and mire that a hog would delight to roll in and eat. I threw some large rocks at intervals along a narrow lane where the drip from the shed eaves made it muddy and it was interesting to see them pick their way over this rock walk to keep out of the mud. They turn away from fouled water and feed. They will go hungry and thirsty rather than drink fouled water or eat dirty feed. There is little offensive odor in a sheep barn. The average person could sit down to a meal with sheep all around him with no ill effects -- healthy well-cared-for sheep, of course. The oil in their wool is lanolin the same as in human skin.

2

Sheep are not popular in farm programs.

They are sold last at the livestock sales, and considered last in pasture and grain programs. The best of the pastures and grains go to the cattle and hogs. Yet many farm advisers declare that few animals will make the farmer as much money as sheep.

This reminds me of the fact that God's sheep are often left out in the world's planning. But the Great Shepherd of the sheep will one day bring His sheep into their rightful place of prominence when He starts planning the world's programs.

3

Sheep need fences.

There was a time when the world was young and sheep and shepherds were few and far between that fences did not exist, But in these days fences are a necessity.

4

No fence is better than its weakest spot.

A hole need not be big enough for the flock to walk through side by side. No, if it is just large enough for one, they will all go through, And the standards we raise between God's flock and the world are no better than their weakest point. The Wesleyans are noted for strengthening their fences. Let's live up to it.

There is a fence between my sheep and my neighbor's hogs. The same fence that keeps my sheep in keeps his hogs out. He has much more trouble with his hogs breaking through into my sheep pasture than I do to keep my sheep from breaking through into his hog pasture. There is nothing over there that my sheep want. His hogs stand and look through the fence but my sheep do not. The smell alone is too much for them. They would not enjoy wading around in the filth and the mud, and any vegetation that the sheep might have one time wanted the hogs have destroyed. If they were allowed into the sheep pasture they would do the same thing to it. So it is with allowing unregenerate people into membership in our churches. They will soon be on committees and boards and in other places of leadership and program planning. Before long there will be nothing there that God's true sheep can find for feed.

One day when one of my (teen-age) lambs was looking through the fence at the hogs I imagine this conversation took place.

"Mother, who are those funny looking people?"

"Why child, those are hogs."

"But Mother, they don't look like we do!"

"No, child, of course not, but they can't help it, they're hogs."

"And, Mother, their talk isn't like ours."

"No dear, of course not."

"And mother, the way they dress! You can see right through to the skin. Mother, why do I have to wear so many more clothes than they do when the weather is so hot?"

"Well dear, it's like this. We could never compel them to dress like we do and even if we could they'd still be hogs. They dress like that because they're hogs and we dress like this because we are sheep. But you see, we dress like this for the sake of others. Ever since there have been men and sheep on the earth we have helped to clothe them. Who ever heard of a hog furnishing clothing to keep people warm? We do this for the sake of others."

"And Mother, something else I noticed, they go in for mixed bathing."

"Well, yes, they do, child, but if you'll notice carefully they are dirtier when they come out than when they went in. We keep much cleaner than they because we avoid all the dirt we can and what falls on us that we can't help, the showers from heaven wash away."

"One more question, Mother; I asked one of them why they dressed like they do instead of dressing like we do, and he said that we were back numbers. That they dress the way they do because this is a modern age."

"Now listen, child, that is not true. Whoever told you that was either dishonest or ignorant. They dress that way because hogs have always dressed that way, and we dress like this because sheep have always worn more clothes than hogs."

5

Poor fences make roguish sheep.

If there is a weak spot in the fence; if a sheep pushes against a fence and it gives, she will push some more. If the fence stretches she will keep stretching it until it gives way. How necessary it is for leaders of a church to have a set of inflexible rules and heed Wesley's advice, "Allow no exempt case. Better one suffer than many." Wesley relates in his Journal an account of expelling 64 members from one society at one time. Twenty-nine for lightness and carelessness." Others for various infractions of the rules. I had one sheep that was very stubborn. She resented and rebelled against everything I tried to do for the good of the flock. Another was a rogue. She was jumping gates, doors, fences, pushing through and under every place she could. Those two sheep went to market and didn't come back. They were a bad influence on the rest of the flock.

6

Leaders in the flock lead slowly -- mostly by example.

I have seen the sheep lying in the shade when evening feeding time came. The leader would get up and take a few steps toward pasture. Another would get up and walk up behind her. She would take a few more steps and stop again. Another would get in line and she would walk a few more steps and stop. Another and another would get in line until all were lined up, then they would proceed to pasture. I have noticed this deliberateness, this lack of nervous haste in almost everything the sheep do. What a rebuke to this age, that has time for everything but those age-old and eternal things that are going to endure.

7

Feed is the most important one thing in caring for sheep.

This was one of the last commands to Peter: not fight nor fleece but "Feed my sheep."

A shepherd can get closer to his sheep with feed than any other way. My sheep have always had a fear of me, but they seem to forget it when they are hungry and I pick up the feed bucket. They crowd around, step on my toes and shove me along the trough as I spread the feed,

But when I have the syringe instead of the feed bucket I lock the door. (Closed class meeting) Then they huddle in the farthest corner trembling, If it were possible I'm sure they would all ask for their letters and join a church where the shepherd would do nothing but feed them.

8

Sheep have no healthy fear of the shepherd who does nothing but feed.

The preacher who says he loves his people too much to reprove, rebuke or say anything harsh to them, will soon have them walking all over him, and losing their respect for him.

If sheep are fed every time they are called they will always come when called. If they are called about three times straight and not fed they will stop coming. But they will come regularly at feeding time without being called if they find feed.

9

Dry concentrated feed requires much water.

There will be serious and sometimes fatal digestive disturbances if adequate water is not provided with dry feed. The preacher who studies more than he prays will likely have something concentrated to feed his people, but it is likely to be dry. How important it is to pray down the anointing and blessing of God upon the truth.

10

Tender or green feed requires little or no water.

This was a surprise to me to see the sheep go for days without wanting any water when the pastures were lush and green, They were getting all they needed.

11

Well-fed sheep are not hurt much by parasites nor endangered much by diseases.

They may be pestered by insects without and parasites within but if they are well-fed and cared for they will stay in good flesh, There have been no serious diseases among my sheep since I obtained them.

They need, however, to receive treatment for parasites whether they appear to need it or not. There has been many a young convert gloriously converted, joyously serving the Lord, attending a spiritual church where his soul was well-fed, who did not apparently need to be sanctified, but he needs it whether the need is glaringly apparent or not.

12

For many lambs in January feed well in August. For healthy lambs in January feed well in December.

Purchasing my sheep in November, I could have no influence on the number of their first crop of lambs. They had an 80% lamb crop and raised 60%. The next year they dropped 175%

lamb crop and raised 150%. More than double because I paid particular attention to what they ate the first two weeks of August. If I had waited until two weeks before lambing time nothing I could have done would have any effect on the quantity and little effect on the quality of the lambs. I wonder if our churches and pastors are aware of the vital and imperative need of proper preparation before a revival.

13

Well fed sheep can stand rugged weather well without injury.

Before lambing time one year I separated the ram and made him a little shelter in his separate lot. Early one morning before daylight during a driving snow out of the northwest I went down to check on the ewes. The ram had scorned the shelter I had built for him and had sought out the highest spot he could find, and was lying there chewing his cud, completely covered with snow except for his eyes and nose, He was comfortable. He was well-fed.

14

When sheep feed themselves they are regular morning and evening.

They spend hours during the heat of the day ruminating, I have watched them and marveled at their unhurried way of preparing for digestion what they had gathered that morning. How many times would you guess they would chew each individual bite? 15 or 20? No, 65 to 90 times, And I thought of our people rushing to church, rushing home, and never finding time to digest the truth they had heard. Truly, meditation is becoming a lost art, and the people of God are certainly the poorer for the loss.

The wise shepherd changes pasture for his sheep every two to three weeks and keeps ahead of the parasites, God would give us something fresh for our people like He did the manna in the wilderness for Israel if we take the time to wait on Him ourselves. We cannot expect our people to relish left overs and warmed overs and the products of dead men's brains. However, we must not fall into the error of seeking to give them something new and different every meal. Someone has well said, "If it's true, it isn't new and if it is new, it isn't true." But we can tell the old, old story that is new each time we tell it if we have waited upon God for His mind and His message and His anointing.

15

When pastures are not changed frequently many lambs will die of parasites.

My neighbor across the road from me lost several lambs from this cause. He never changed pasture. I have lost none from that cause.

16

Unpalatable and rough feeds may be refused even though nutritious unless ground fine and mixed with molasses or some other good tasting feed.

Wise indeed is the preacher who does not preach by the hour or week on one unpalatable truth but mixes it with something that improves its flavor without detracting from its usefulness.

17

Sheep can smell salt a long distance.

A modern self-styled nutritionist is waging a war against people using salt, But he does not know his Bible. Salt is a Bible standard of excellence. We are commanded to "have salt in ourselves." When sheep have been two weeks without salt they will turn from the feed trough to go to the salt block and instead of licking it they will chew and scrape on it and chew up what they break off and devour it greedily. It furnishes the chlorine which makes the hydrochloric acid so necessary to digest proteins, and other plant nutrients. Thus salt has the power to change plants into animals -- the power to lift something from a lower to a higher kingdom.

And when Jesus called us "The salt of the earth" this is included. We have the power to turn people from darkness to light and see them translated from the dominion of darkness into the Kingdom of God's dear Son. If I do not make salt available for my sheep, can I blame them for going over to the neighbor's if they can find salt over there? There is much talk today of church loyalty. I am afraid of blind church loyalty, If a denomination is unflinchingly loyal to God and the principles of righteousness and true holiness, there will be enough salt in their plans and programs to attract their sheep. But if they are not loyal to God they will lose the interest of their best sheep and all their demands for loyalty will not avail.

18

Healthy sheep follow only the shepherd and answer only his voice.

A sick sheep will follow almost anyone. The sheep across the road from me are not treated regularly for parasites and are never put on fresh pasture. When I call my sheep those sheep will answer and come running until the fence stops them. But when their owner comes and calls them, mine do not answer him!

America has a lot of sheep that are undernourished and sickly. Is it surprising then when a wolf comes in sheep's clothing and calls that he gets a large following?

19

Sheep have many enemies.

There is an ageless enmity between sheep and dogs. To my knowledge none of my sheep have ever been chased or injured by a dog. But when a dog comes within sight or sound they throw up their heads and show every sign of fear and nervousness and may start for the shelter of the fold. However, this fear is not hereditary. It is a conditioned reflex. Sometime before I ever owned these sheep their ancestors had spent a night of terror with dogs among them pulling them down, killing, maiming and terrorizing. And the parents have conditioned the young down through untold generations, and it is taught to each new generation by the preceding one. I saw a small lamb one day walk up and touch noses with a neighbor's rat-terrier, without fear. I could easily imagine the conversation that took place when she went to tell her mother about it.

"Mother, I have a new boy friend."

"Now look, daughter, girls don't have their half-brothers for boy friends."

"Oh, now, mother, I'm not talking about one of them. This boy lives next door."

"Daughter, I'm horrified by your ignorance. Don't you know that's a dog? Do you hear me? A dog! You! A dog for a boy friend! How utterly ridiculous! Do you not know that dogs are our most dangerous enemies?"

"But Mother, he's different. He's white just like we are and he's so friendly, And he says he likes me and he wouldn't mind being a sheep himself. And I just believe I can change him."

"Now listen, child, many an innocent lamb has fallen for that same old line, and had some gay dog pull the wool over her eyes. He's a dog and his parents are dogs and nothing but a miracle can ever make anything but a dog out of him. His smooth words and your best efforts can never change him. Let him become a sheep first inside and out and then we'll see about your being friends with him. Now you stay away from him, and when you see him coming you run to me. I'll stamp my foot at him and he'll tuck his tail between his legs and run."

He must have. The lamb evidently accepted this counsel. For the unhappy affair ended and the lamb learned to be afraid of dogs just like her mother was, Is it possible that a sheep can teach her youngster more effectively than Christian parents can teach their children to be "not unequally yoked together with unbelievers" and 'the world is not a friend of grace to help us on to God?'

20

Sheep have to be cornered and treated about four times a year.

No sheep of mine ever willingly offered to take parasite medicine, I have to corner them, force their mouths open and force the medicine down their throats. How happy are those people who accept the negative truth with the positive, the bitter medicine with the sweet; say "Lord, pour it on us" and highly esteem the minister who loves them so deeply that he will declare unto them all the counsel of God.

21

When sheep are cornered until they know there is no escape they will drop to their knees.

What an example for us. When God's truth gets us into a corner do we alibi, make excuses, or drop to our knees?

22

Sheep have an admirable quality of being able to suffer silently.

It was no accident that the inspired prophet speaking of Jesus said, "He is led as a lamb to the slaughter and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb so he openeth not his mouth." Our pastor went along one day when I took my sheep to get them sheared. He marveled at the way they sat there leaning up against the shearer, without a struggle and without a sound. All went well until he

came to the biggest fattest ewe in the flock. She struggled, resisted, flailed and did her best to get loose. She fought the shearer almost from the start to finish. Since a good wool-producing sheep will yield one tenth or more of her weight in wool I compare it to the tithe. I explained, "You see that stubborn ewe? She has been barren for three years." She had produced no converts and now was even raising a fuss about paying her tithe. She went into our deep-freeze a few weeks later. Many non-tithing church members have gone into deep-freeze churches.

23

A new member may infect the whole flock.

The first ram brought external parasites. Before he appeared I had not seen one -- not even at shearing time. But a few months after he came into the flock, the sheep, and the lambs especially, were just crawling with them. Fortunately, there was an effective powder that being sprinkled liberally on their necks eliminated this parasite entirely.

How careful we ought to be about taking new members into our churches. Paul says, "Know ye not that a little leaven leavens the whole lump?" "Purge out therefore the old leaven that ye may be a new lump as ye are unleavened. 1st Cor. 5:6-7 and in verse 13, "Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person."

24

Sheep show little gratitude.

Only once did I ever have a sheep to show the least sign of gratitude. One old thin ewe with her last lambs, a set of twin ewes turned her head and licked my wrist as I helped her lambs to suckle. Jesus marveled at the lack of gratitude of the healed lepers. "Where are the nine?" How many ministers have wrestled and prayed and perhaps fasted in seeking the mind of the Lord for His message and think "Surely the people will appreciate this truth!" Then have them march out with a quick hand-shake and a grunt. I once observed an outstanding Japanese Christian who suffered persecution by his own people during the second world war after speaking to a large conference gathering, stand by the altar alone after the service with only one person going up to express appreciation.

25

When they fail to have lambs they fight among themselves.

One autumn we came back from a six weeks evangelistic tour to find a rented ram at the point of death from worm infestation, It was late and I was too busy to obtain another ram. Of course, there were no lambs that next spring. I kept noticing the ewes fighting among themselves, They would fight until they were exhausted, pant awhile to regain their wind, and fight some more. It is nothing unusual to see the rams fight, but these were the mothers in the flock. They had never acted like this when they were busy taking care of lambs. No, only when they failed to bear lambs. And I am confident that many church quarrels and fusses would have been avoided if the Christians had had sufficient divine mother love, to have been bearing spiritual children and caring for them. It is immensely frustrating to be spiritually barren and see your own children taking the way of the world.

26

Sheep do not do well in low, wet country.

They like the highlands. Time and again I noticed that they would feed to and bed down in the highest spot of whatever lot they were in. In our western mountains moose are found along the streams feeding on the willow bud and bark, a little higher mule deer and elk, but on the highest elevations, that supreme test of the hunter's skill and stamina; the bighorn sheep. They are nimble and fleet of foot. They are not afraid of dizzy heights. They have amazing places called sheep ladders where they jump back and forth from side to side in almost vertical fissures of the rock and gain the highest elevations safe from their enemies, where even a wolf cannot follow them; and then in the bright sunlight above the clouds they lie in peace and chew their cuds enjoying a million-dollar view.

27

Sheep have a social gregarious nature. They do not like to be alone.

The "lone wolf" does not apply to sheep. When I hear someone say, "Oh, I don't need to go to church, I stay home and listen to the radio, guess I'm the lone wolf type," I must conclude that they may well be a lone wolf but not a lone sheep. Sheep like to be with a flock, I have seen individual sheep or lambs inadvertently graze away from the rest of the flock and suddenly raise their heads and find they were alone, They would immediately stop grazing and start to hunt the rest of the sheep in considerable alarm, I have little confidence in the profession of any professor who does not like to be with other Christians. One of the proofs that we have passed from death unto life is that "we love the brethren." And we are commanded to "Forsake not the assembling of ourselves together as the manner of some is but to exhort one another and so much the more as we see the day approaching."

28

Sheep get down easily and may require help to get up.

They may struggle until they are exhausted on a hillside with their feet up hill, or above them in a ditch and if not helped soon they will die, We should not be too critical of some of the folks in our midst who get "down" frequently and must have help to get up.

29

Sheep can communicate to each other without making a sound.

I have seen the mothers times uncounted tell their lambs it was feeding time. They did not make any noise at all. They just raised their heads and looked across the pasture at their lambs with a certain steady look and the lambs came at a dead run. In a recent missionary book I was reading, "Stones of Fire," I believe, I noticed where a young man testified that he had been reproved and encouraged by just a look from another devout Christian. Jesus just looked at Peter and he went out and wept bitterly.

30

There is a high degree of mother love among sheep.

A ewe that will not own her lamb is suffering from a serious nutritional deficiency. I have never had this happen. I have seen mothers at lambing time giving undivided attention to the matter at hand. With quiet groanings that could not be uttered they brought forth. Much like I have heard great saints pray with seekers around an altar. We live on a four lane highway. Traffic is heavy, especially on weekends. One day one of the mother ewes went out near this highway for her altar service. She paid no attention whatever to the Cadillacs, Chryslers or Corvettes. The Lincolns and Rolls Royces and the rest of them did not even distract her. Perhaps a half million dollars worth of cars went by while her young was a-borning. She did not even glance at them. She had more important work to do. She was busy seeing to it that that species of animal called sheep should not perish from the earth. Nor does her attention diminish when the lamb is born. She spends hours drying him off and examining him to be sure he is all right, This is one time she will not run from the shepherd or dogs. This is one time she is interested in something else more than the feed trough. The least call from him and she is at his side to do all she can for his comfort and protection. And many times when the sheep were lying outside in cold weather and the ground was frozen I have seen the old sheep allow the lambs to bed down on their backs. What a perfect bed for a young lamb in cold weather. This suggests one of the great failures I see in the churches where I am called to evangelize, This lack of real mother love, And there have been times when the truth has gone home and some hungry hearts have sought at the altar with no mother love shown among the members that I have wondered with a sinking feeling, "Who will care for this lamb until he learns to walk, eat and care for himself?"

The true shepherd who is willing to lay down his life for the sheep, does not love them any more than the sheep love their lambs. The old ewe that I called Wolf because she had a long tail with a crook in it and was thin until her ribs showed; the only one that ever showed the least sign of gratitude literally gave her life for her last two lambs. She was old and thin and her teeth were about gone, I made frequent trips to the supermarket to get their cabbage and lettuce trimmings to give her something she could eat. I tried to supplement the lambs' diet with a bottle and in a desperate effort to save her diminishing strength I separated her from her lambs. But she pleaded so piteously for them I gave in and put them back with her. She gave her last strength for them and then lay down on the sunny hillside and went to sleep, but she left me two ewe lambs to take her place in the flock, Would God our church members would do as well.

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II. THE LAMBS

The first three most important rules for lambs are one. Never Make Pets! They invariably become pests! They are in the car, in the house, on the shepherd's toes, soiling his clothes and when they get older butting him. They have lost their respectful fear of the shepherd. Foolish indeed is the minister who makes pets among his parishioners. They will invariably turn on him and give him no end of trouble.

The first three hours in a cold world are the most critical.

If not soon warmed from within they must be warmed from without until they can be warmed from within. One night after prayer meeting I looked into the sheep shed and found a set of new-born twins with icicles formed on their ears and tails in the 20 below zero weather. I grabbed them up and my wife and I got them over the furnace and thoroughly warmed and dried them. Then I took them back down and showed them where the breakfast nook was. They lived and thrived. Otherwise they would have probably contracted pneumonia and died.

2

Most lambs surviving the first three days will live.

3

Lambs learn their fears mostly from experience and from their mothers.

The fear of the shepherd and the fear of dogs are both learned.

4

No need to buy sheep to enlarge the flock.

A well-cared for flock will double and sometimes triple their number in one year. The good shepherd with a well-cared for flock will have sheep to sell.

5

Lambs are counted with the sheep.

From the moment a lamb is born he is counted with the sheep. What a tragedy to relegate our young converts to the future and out of active participation in the church by calling them the church of tomorrow, This is not true, If they are converted they are very much a part of the church of today. If they are not a part of the church of today it is not likely that they will be in the next generation. They may be the leaders of tomorrow, but they are a very important part of the church of today. Nobody but children can get into the kingdom of God, And God has no grandchildren. Our children must either be converted and become a part of the church here and now, or they are next to pagans and heathen, All the sheep with the lambs are counted frequently. When one of mine was missing I didn't send him a postcard and hope that he would appear next Sunday. I dropped everything and went right now to find out why he wasn't there, I have saved the lives of some by this prompt search. I cannot help but wonder if we could greatly diminish the number of our absentees from church and Sunday School and also cut down our infantile mortality rate among our young converts if we went immediately to find the reason for their absence.

6

Lambs must be fed carefully.

They need more frequent and more nutritious feed, given more often than older sheep, And for their own protection they need to be fed separately. They will eat all they want from their own feeding and then will go and eat anything they can with the older sheep. If not fed alone, the older

sheep will crowd them out and gobble up all the feed. Have you ever seen older folks take over a young people's service, whether it was praying, testifying or answering quiz questions?

7

Lambs like warmth and light.

If there is a sunny spot in the barn they will flock to it and bask in the warmth. How important it is that young converts in our churches find a warm atmosphere and are made to feel a warm welcome in our midst.

8

They like to exercise and play.

My wife and I have stood and laughed until tears ran down our cheeks at the antics of our lambs. Those about the same age would run races, jump off the high places, jump in the air throwing their heads and kicking their feet an extra time while air-borne. Then they would climb the highest place they could find and shove each other off while their elders lay calmly by chewing their cuds, It would have been as abnormal for the lambs to act like old sheep as it would have for the old sheep to act like lambs. Need I say more?

9

Lambs can be overburdened too young.

Experts advise against allowing the ewe lambs to bear young their first year. Contrary to my wishes some of mine did. But everyone of them that did died either while their young was a-borning or a few months later. And I greatly fear it is possible to kill our young converts by over-zealousness in insisting that they grow up too swiftly. As one wise mother said, "Don't try to put old heads on young shoulders."

* * * * *

III.

THE SHEPHERD

1

The shepherd must be a man of authority.

Jesus spoke with authority. Paul instructs Timothy to speak with all authority. No minister who is in bondage or fear to anyone in his congregation can do this.

2

The Church Boss

Once I had a ram who decided he was going to be boss in the flock. He constantly challenged my authority. Every time I examined a ewe with a lame foot or trimmed her nails he would come charging up with his head down in battle position. I would have been very foolish to

have assumed a like stance. Had I done so he would have won the first battle and probably broken my neck also. But I knew that wouldn't do. I didn't butt heads with him. It is his toughest strongest point. No, I knew he had a very tender spot on the end of his nose. When he came charging I would give him a quick slap on the end of the nose. He would retreat to a far corner shaking his head in dismay. I wouldn't fight his way and he was confused. The last time he offered to fight there were about four inches of snow on the ground. I let him come until he was close enough for me to grab him. I flipped him on his back so quickly he didn't know what was happening, and washed his face with snow. I did a thorough job. I rubbed it well into his eyes and ears, his nose and mouth. It cured him. He never offered to fight me again.

Brother Wireman says he would rather meet the devil himself than a church boss for if you resist the devil he'll flee from you, but resist a church boss and he'll jump on you. But one thing certain, you cannot conquer a church boss by fighting on his terms. You'll have to find his tender spot.

3

Sheep without a shepherd.

Jesus speaks of a people who were scattered as sheep without a shepherd. Of all the animals that man has domesticated none are so dependent upon human help as sheep. In the shepherd's absence they are at the mercy of wolves, and thieves that come not but to steal and to kill and destroy and other forces that do not know the meaning of mercy. A part-time shepherd will be better than no shepherd at all but the sheep are likely to suffer in his absence.

A full time shepherd will live with his sheep and watch over them 24 hours a day. A true shepherd loves his sheep. He would not be afraid to take one of his sheep in his car to the vet if it needed it. A city-reared woman married a sheep rancher. Later she objected when they started to town with three sheep in the back seat of the car. He answered, "Sheep bought the car." How about the pastor who thinks his car is too nice to haul poor people to church? Did not sheep buy his car?

4

A hireling cannot care for the sheep because he is a hireling.

A true shepherd cares for the sheep and monetary remuneration is not his first consideration. But a hireling cares not for the sheep. He'll get his wages whether the sheep eat or starve, live or die, multiply or diminish, survive or perish, May the Lord deliver us from hollow-hearted and heavy-handed hirelings!

5

The hurried shepherd makes the sheep nervous.

It took me a while to understand why my sheep were so nervous when I was around. It was because I was hurrying to get the feed in the trough and get going. When I relaxed and moved at their speed, or stood perfectly still a little while they would relax, walk up to me, nuzzle my clothing or nibble feed out of my hand.

How about the professional evangelist who must have an altar full of seekers by a certain night to protect his reputation? How about the overly ambitious pastor who is going to rush his own program through whether or not? Is it any wonder our people are confused and nervous? Let's move in God's time and their time and our sheep will move along with us.

6

The shepherd had better know what his sheep feed on 24 hours a day.

One day I noticed a lamb running in circles -- getting no where but into exhaustion. Another was walking around with its nose pointing straight up. I called the vet. "Sugar deficiency," he said. "Get some molasses feed." I did but it did not help. I went to the county agent's office. "What do you have on diseases of sheep?" I started through one of the books he handed me. The symptoms sounded just like lockjaw but these lambs did not have lockjaw. When I came to forage poisoning everything dovetailed. They had been eating something such as nightshade, milkweed, water hemlock, snakeroot or young burdock. I changed their pasture, after going over it carefully and they survived.

When the people of God do not come to church at feeding time, run in circles without getting anywhere, and go around with their noses in the air, the chances are they have been feeding on something that has poisoned them. Does the pastor have any responsibility to see what his people feed on away from church? He'd better have. They can spoil their appetites with cheap fiction and violent television programs until they will have no appetite for God's word.

I'll conclude this with a two-fold illustration. I knew a man who ran a super-market but was still a farmer at heart who decided he wanted to raise different breeds of chickens and show them at the county fairs. He first obtained a copy of a book called, "Standard of Perfection" on poultry that told just exactly what each breed of chicken was to be like -- whether it was to be single or rose combed. If single, how many teeth in the comb. How many black and white stripes on the wings of a barred rock. How wide certain bones were to be spaced. What color feet and head were to be. How far down the feathers were to come on the legs and how high up on the neck. He then obtained a group of each breed of chickens and when mature he compared them with the specifications listed in the book to find the best in every group. The result was that he took many blue ribbons, even when competing with men who had raised poultry all their lives, He was amused though. First, that many of the farmers with whom he competed did not know that such a book existed. Secondly, because he knew that he was using the same book the judge used who identified the winners.

When I obtained these sheep I went to the county agent's office and obtained a copy of a book written by experts on their care, When I started taking my lambs to market they consistently were tops. One day I sold three when there were a hundred lambs sold. Mine I found on phoning the next day had topped the market again. I turned away from the phone with a grin so broad that the corners of my mouth were whispering congratulations in both ears. Then my wife came at me with her hands outstretched to shrink my head back to size. After she finished her treatment and went back to her work, I looked up to God with a tremendously sobering thought gripping me. The tears started to my eyes. "Lord, how can I be sure the lambs I send up There will be tops?" The Spirit answered back quickly and surely, "Just go by the Book."

Because I knew that I did not know how to care for sheep I had obtained this book -- this standard of perfection. Farmers who had raised sheep all their lives, and thought they did know did not obtain the book. My lambs excelled theirs because I went by the book and they did not.

Need I say that God has given us a Standard of Perfection? Can any of us know what the Judge of all the earth requires if we neglect the Book? I cannot forget that the Judge on that great day will be using the same Book that He has commanded us to follow. Let's use it. Let's depend on it. Then when that Great Shepherd of the sheep shall appear we shall not be ashamed before Him at His appearing -- neither for ourselves nor for our sheep.

* * * * *

IV. WHO?

Who taught the wasp the secret
Of hypodermic's power?
Thus numbing spider victims
Preserve them to the hour
When baby wasp should hunger
For needed food to eat
And find in his mud pantry
A fresh supply of meat?

Who taught the worm the secret
Of changing leaves to silk?
And ants to pasture plant lice
And gather in the milk?
Or bees evaporation
For nectar gathered in?
Or spider his crocheting
His fragile web to spin?

Who splashed the robin's waist-coat
With cherry juice so red?
And put the scraps from red-bird,
On old woodpecker's head?
And taught the crows the secret
Of posting out a spy?
With wisdom nigh uncanny
And telescopic eye?

Who taught old mother Jersey
To hide her calf new-born?
Or fox his chicken blitz-krieg

In early hours of morn?
Who made Killdeer an artist
At playing she was hurt?
To lead you when you chased her
From young hid in the dirt?
Who painted blue the zenith,
And tinted sunset red?

And curved the perfect rainbow
Through rain-drop spectrum spread?
And sprinkled night with starlight
I ask "What is His name?"
The world in adoration
His glory should proclaim.

Who loved a fallen sinner,
And died upon a tree?
Thus satisfying justice
That sinners might be free.
Who sent the Holy Spirit?
Let all join to proclaim
His right to praise and honor,
For holy is His name.

Who was it built a city?
With jasper walls so clear,
And streets of gold transparent
Where sin shall not appear.
Let all join in the chorus
And all His love proclaim,
Because He is my Saviour,
And Jesus is His name.

* * * * *

THE END