

# The Shepherd Psalm



for Children 



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The shepherd psalm for  
children









DAVID THE SHEPHERD BOY OVERCOMES THE LION.

The Shepherd Psalm  
for  
Children

BY

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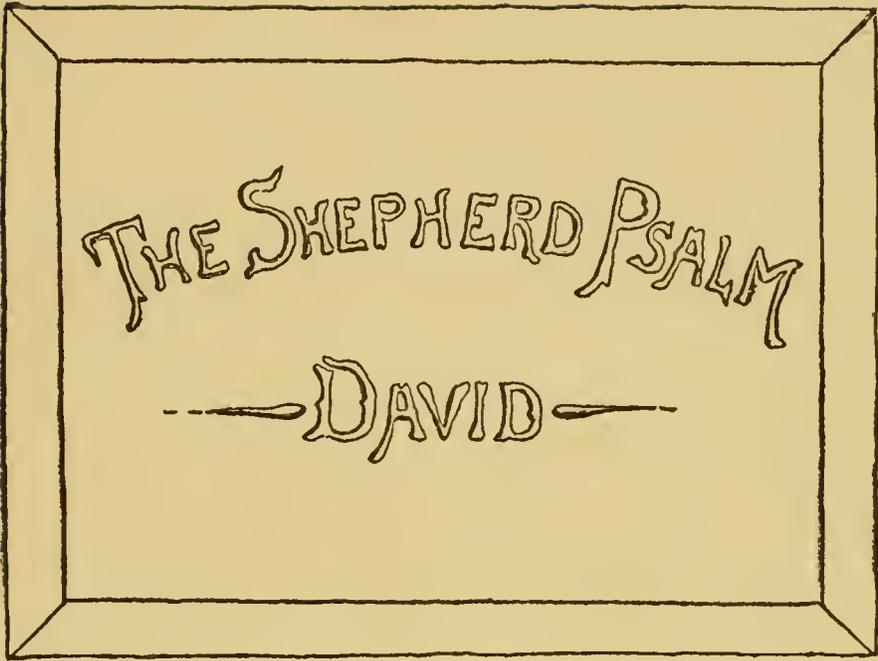
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## I. THE SHEPHERD PSALM

ONE day little Ellen, while turning over the leaves of a book that belonged to her mother, found a pressed rose. She laughed as she said, "How funny this faded flower looks when the garden is full of lovely fresh roses!"

"Yes," her mother replied, "but, Ellen, that withered rose is more beautiful to me than any that grow in the garden, because when I was a little girl about your age it helped me to bear a great trouble."

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Of course Ellen wanted to know how that could be, and her mother told her the story. She had lost her father and mother when a little girl, and was taken to a strange place to live among people she had never seen before. Ellen could understand just a little about how lonely she must have been, for once when she went away from home to stay only a week she cried every day because she was so homesick, and yet she knew she was going to see her mother soon again. So she asked, "Did you cry?"

"Yes, dear, I cried very hard, and it seemed to me I could never be happy again. I went into the garden and threw myself on the grass under the trees and sobbed out loud, thinking no one was near. Soon I heard the voice of a girl about my own age, who begged me not to cry, and asked what was the matter. We seemed to be friends in a few moments, for she made me feel that she was sorry for me and loved me. As she went away she promised to call for me to go to school with her the next day, and gave me the rose she had in her hand, to make me re-

member, she said, that we were to be friends, and that I was not to cry any more. It did help me to be brave and cheerful, and that is the reason I have kept it twenty years. It seems beautiful to me, and I love to look at it."

"It is beautiful, mother," said Ellen, as she closed the book, gently, "and I love it too, better than all the roses in the garden, since I know its story and how it helped you."

Long, long ago a poem was written which I think is the most beautiful poem in all the world. You might not think it very wonderful if you were to read it over without knowing anything about it; but when you understand all that the words mean, you will like it better; and when you know that it has helped more people when they were sick, or sad, or afraid, or when they were dying, than any other poem ever did, I am sure you, too, will think it very beautiful.

Because it can be such a comfort to those who read or learn it, I want to tell you about it; for if you have it safely put away in your own mind it will be there to

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help you when you need it, and you will have it ready to tell to some one else.

If you were to see it you might not think it a poem, because the words do not rhyme, and it is not always printed as poems are. The reason it is different in these ways is that it has been changed into our language from another; for it was written in the far-off country where Jesus lived when He was on the earth, a thousand years before He came, and in a strange language that you and I could not read at all. It was written to be sung in church, and so is called a Psalm.

The name of the man who wrote it is David, who, when he was a man was a great king; but when he was a boy he took care of his father's sheep. That might have been an easy thing to do if he could always have stayed near home with them. But there was not pasture enough near by, so he had to go away with the flock for weeks at a time, and not only see that they had plenty to eat and drink, but protect them from the wild animals that lived in the mountains.

He loved his sheep so much that when

a lion came and took one in his mouth, David made him drop the sheep and then killed him. He did the same with a bear who tried to steal some of his flock.<sup>1</sup> He was not afraid of the wild animals, so he must have been brave; he was watching and ready to help the moment he saw a sheep in danger, so we know he was careful; and he was willing to risk his own life to save one of his flock, which shows that he was a loving shepherd.

When David wrote this Psalm, he thought so much about the time when he was a shepherd, and said so much about the way a shepherd takes care of his sheep, that it has been called THE SHEPHERD PSALM. It has a number too, and is often called by that because of the place it has among the Psalms in the Bible. If you look for it there you will find that it is the TWENTY-THIRD.

<sup>1</sup> 1 Samuel xvii. 34, 35.





## II. GOD'S LOVING CARE

DAVID was the youngest son in his father's family, and while he was tending sheep his brothers were away fighting in the king's army. One day David's father asked him to go and take some presents to his brothers and to their captain. So David left his sheep with a keeper and started. When he reached the place where the army was encamped, he found that King Saul's army was on a hill on one side of a valley, and their enemies on the op-

posite hillside. Looking across he saw a very tall man come down into the valley, and heard him say in a loud voice, "I defy the armies of Israel this day; give me a man, that we may fight together. If he be able to fight with me and to kill me, then will we be your servants: but if I prevail against him, and kill him, then shall ye be our servants, and serve us."

David was astonished that any one in that army should dare defy God's people, and yet he saw that every one in Saul's army was afraid of the giant, and that no one dared go to meet him. But David was not afraid. He knew that God would take care of any one who trusted in Him, and that God was able to conquer even such a giant; so he wanted to answer the challenge. Some one told Saul, who did not seem at first to think that David was big enough or strong enough to fight with a giant. But David told him about the lion and the bear that he had killed, and then Saul said "Go, and the Lord be with thee."<sup>1</sup>

You know the story, I am sure, and can

<sup>1</sup> 1 Samuel xvii.

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tell the name of the giant, and what David used as a weapon, and how it all ended ; and you can see how, when he was doing his duty every day as a shepherd he was getting ready to do this great work for his king and his people. If he had not been brave away on the hills where only God could see, he could not have been brave in the valley of Elah where the soldiers of two armies were watching him, and where the safety of his whole nation depended on his success.

After the fighting was over Saul was so pleased with what David had done that he invited him to live in the palace. But in a little while, when the people sang songs of praise for Saul they put in David's name too, and even gave David ten times as much praise as they did Saul.<sup>1</sup> That did not please the king at all, and he became very jealous, so that soon it was not safe for David to stay where Saul was, and he went away.<sup>2</sup> But Saul had grown to hate David so that he sent men out in every direction to find and kill him, and David had to hide in the forests and caves

<sup>1</sup> I Samuel xviii. 7.

<sup>2</sup> I Samuel xix. 10-12.

of the mountains for a long time. He was often hungry and cold, and must have been lonely and sad so far from all the people and places that he loved.

I do not know surely, but I think that some day when David was hiding from King Saul he remembered the time when he took care of his father's sheep, and how carefully he watched to see that they were not hungry or thirsty, and that they did not get into danger. Then he thought of himself, hunted by men who wanted to kill him as the wild animals wanted to kill his sheep, and perhaps down in his heart he said, "I wish I had some one to take care of me as I used to care for my sheep, some one who loved me as I loved them."

But if he did think that, I am sure his very next thought was, "Why I have! There is Some One who cares for me; One who is wise, strong, loving,—better than an earthly shepherd ever could be." And because David knew this he began his Psalm with these words, "THE LORD IS MY SHEPHERD, I SHALL NOT WANT."

To know that he was being cared for all the time by his Heavenly Father must

have been a great comfort to David. Earthly shepherds cannot always watch, for they must sleep sometimes; but in another Psalm David says about the Lord, his Shepherd, "He that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep";<sup>1</sup> so he knew that every moment, day and night, the Lord's loving care was over him.

That was a very pleasant thought for David, but it would not help other people very much if no one but David could have this loving care. If you have ever seen a flock of sheep you know that one shepherd can care for a good many sheep and lambs if they follow him. But the Lord, David's Shepherd, has room for all the people in the world, grown people and children too, and He wants every one to come, and all who hear to say "Come."<sup>2</sup> So all who love and obey Him have His tender care, and each one may say for himself, "THE LORD IS MY SHEPHERD, I SHALL NOT WANT."

<sup>1</sup> Psalm cxxi. 4.

<sup>2</sup> Revelation xxii. 17.



### III. A SKY FULL OF GOODNESS

A LITTLE boy whose name is Arthur, wanted his pony to eat grass, but did not want to turn him loose in a meadow for fear he would not come to be harnessed when the children wanted to go out riding. So a stake was driven into the ground and the pony tied to it with a long rope, and Arthur thought there was plenty of grass in the space where the pony could go, to feed such a small horse a long time. But when he went out in the afternoon he

found that the pony was not eating, and looking carefully he saw that all the grass as far as the rope would stretch on every side was eaten off close to the roots.

Arthur's father had been telling him the evening before about David as a shepherd boy. Arthur did not see then why David would ever have to take the sheep away from home, for it seemed to him that there was grass enough in their one large meadow for a thousand sheep, and he thought there must have been a great deal more grass than that on the hills right around Bethlehem.<sup>1</sup>

But when he took the pony back to the barn he said to his father, "I do not wonder now that David had to go away from home with his flock. If we had four ponies like Gypsy, I believe they could eat all the grass in the small pasture, and it certainly would take a great deal more than there is in the large pasture for a flock of sheep."

When the grass in the pastures near David's home had been all eaten off by the sheep, more must be found, and David

<sup>1</sup> 1 Samuel xvii. 15.

would start out with them to look for it. He would lead them first to the nearest place he knew about where there was good pasture, and he was glad when he found a meadow where the grass grew thick and green, because he knew that there for a while his flock would have plenty.

But sheep do not eat all the time, and when they are satisfied they like to lie down; but after they have rested a while they will be hungry again. So that David would want his sheep to be all the time where the grass grows soft and thick. He would not like his sheep to lie down to sleep in a dusty road, or among the rocks and brambles of a mountain. The green pasture would be the best, not only because it would be a pleasanter place to lie, but because when the sheep woke up and wanted to eat they would find the grass all around them. David would have been glad to keep his sheep in green pastures all the time, for then they never would be hungry and unsatisfied.

But David wanted more from his Shepherd, the Lord, than just something to

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eat. More than anything else he wanted to be good, and yet he could not without help, for he had no goodness of his own. Our Heavenly Father, David's Shepherd, has all the goodness there is, and a happy thing for His children to know is that He has "a whole sky full" enough for all the people in the world "to be good with all the time."

David knew this, and that when he was in the mountains hiding from Saul, far away from God's house, he was not far away from God's goodness. He was like the sheep who are asleep with the grass growing all around them; and he thought, "God's goodness is all around me; I can have all that I need at any moment, wherever I am." This is what he meant when he said, **HE MAKETH ME TO LIE DOWN IN GREEN PASTURES.**

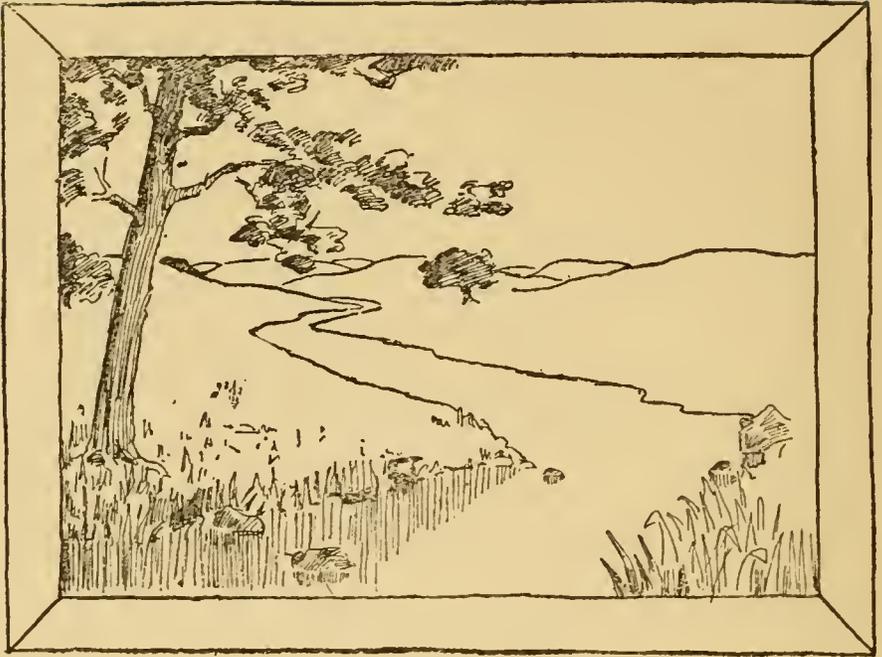
A great many children, as well as grown people, can say that, too, for themselves. They love the Lord, they want to be good, they have no goodness of their own, but know that their Heavenly Father has so much that He has plenty to give away. They know that they need not go to

church or any other special place to ask for it, because whether they are at school, at home, on the street, at work, or at play, God's goodness is all about them, and they may have all they need at any moment.

Can you imagine a sheep so foolish that when he was hungry and in the midst of a meadow filled with sweet grass, he would not eat? You may be sure that no sheep would do that. Is it not strange, then, that boys and girls, who know that their loving Heavenly Father has goodness enough for all, and wants so much to give it to them, do not take it?

Jesus said, "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled."<sup>1</sup> Those who want to do right will need to ask for goodness very often, but if they love the Lord they are all the time where His goodness is, and they may be filled with it. That is what these words mean: HE MAKETH ME TO LIE DOWN IN GREEN PASTURES.

<sup>1</sup> Matthew v. 6.



#### IV. PERFECT PEACE.

WHEN David had found pasture for his sheep his work was not finished, for they would need water as well as food, and he would have to find a good place for them to drink. Up in the White Mountains in our own country there is a stream which comes dashing down, tossing itself over rocks, and rushing along at such a rate that people call it "Mad River." The sides in most places are very steep, and the water makes a great noise as it tum-

bles over its rough bed. Such a stream as that would not be a good one at which to water sheep, for it is too rough and would frighten them; some of the tender lambs would get hurt on the sharp stones, so we know that no shepherd would choose such a place if he could find water more quiet.

But some animals are afraid to drink even in a good place. I had a saddle horse who had travelled a long time on a hot day and was very thirsty. Finding a little brook going so softly through a meadow that you could hardly see it move at all, I guided her to it thinking she would be very glad to have some of the cool water. She did want it, but when she felt her feet sinking into the soft earth at the edge, she was afraid and drew back. I had to coax her a long time before she could get courage enough to go to the water. I knew it was a safe place, and that if she did not drink then it would be a long time before she could have any water. That is the reason I took her in what seemed to her a dangerous place. When she did obey she found just what

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she most needed, and was much more comfortable and contented afterward.

I do not know whether David's sheep were ever afraid to drink where he wanted them to, or not; but I do know that he would not ask them to go where he was not willing to go himself. He led his sheep, and to do that he had to go first into every place where the flock went. He led them in the best places for them to go, and when they needed a drink he led them by still water, such as we have in our picture. Perhaps the sheep did not always think it was the best place, but they would follow because they loved and trusted their shepherd, and when they did follow they found that their wants were satisfied, and that they were safe.

David had a great deal of trouble in the part of his life when Saul was trying to kill him, but it was not the worst kind of trouble that any one can have. If a voice in the heart says, "You have been doing wrong," then there is no peace or comfort until the wrong has been forgiven. But David knew he had done nothing to Saul that he ought to be sorry for. He knew

he had done his duty, and that he loved the Lord, his Shepherd, and so in his heart he had peace and happiness, even when his body was cold, or hungry, or thirsty.

One time when the prophet Isaiah was writing a song to help his people to trust in God, he said, "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on Thee: because he trusteth in Thee."<sup>1</sup> And that is just about what David thought when he said "HE LEADETH ME BESIDE THE STILL WATERS."

He was having a hard time, and the way seemed rough and not always safe, but because the Lord, his Shepherd, was leading him he knew it must be all right, and he was ready to follow obediently; and because he did, his Heavenly Father gave him peace and comfort.

Very often little people get into trouble by being disobedient, and there is no cure for that except coming back to the loving Heavenly Father and asking for His forgiveness. But sometimes those who are trying to do right seem to have a hard time, and for them there is a message in

<sup>1</sup> Isaiah xxvi. 3.

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these words that David said. Remembering what a kind, wise, loving Guide is leading, they will know He would not take them in an unsafe place, and they will find peace in thinking, "HE LEADETH ME BESIDE THE STILL WATERS."





## V. STRENGTH FOR THE WEAK

ONE time a father and his little boy had to travel over a road after a heavy snow-storm. The boy's mother hated to have him undertake the journey, for no one had gone that way since the storm and no paths had been cut; but the boy said, "I shall be all right, mother, for father will be with me:" and so they started, the father going ahead and the boy following, stepping in the tracks which his father made. That was the only way the little

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fellow could walk at all, the snow was so deep; but even with the help that his father gave him by breaking the way, he soon grew very tired. Still he struggled on and did not complain; but after a while he could not go another step, and sank down in the snow, calling to his father as he fell. Of course you know what his father did. He took him in his arms and carried him, very glad that he had strength enough for two, and did not let the tired boy walk again until he was so rested that he wanted to try his own strength once more.

When David took his sheep out and was looking for pasture for them, they often had to travel a long way before he could find a good place for them to stay; and if the road was dusty and the day hot, very often a lamb would get so tired it would faint and drop down. The shepherd was always watching, because he knew that the lambs were not very strong, and when one fell he would pick it up and carry it in his arms, as that father did his little boy, and as the shepherd in our picture is doing, until it was strong enough to walk

again. David was sorry, I am sure, when one of his flock lost its strength so as not to be able to walk; but he was always glad to give such a tired lamb the help it needed, and would not make it walk again until it was able and willing to do so.

In trying to obey God's rules David grew tired sometimes, and he knew that then he was like the weak, fainting lamb. He knew, too, that the Lord loved him a great deal more than he had loved his tired lamb, and that when his strength was gone God would give it back to him. He said, "HE RESTORETH MY SOUL." This sounds hard to understand, but it means just this: "When I am tired, so tired that I cannot walk in the right way any longer, He will forgive me and give me back my strength to do right."

Children often find it hard to be good, and sometimes get so tired trying that they even think, "It is no use. I have wanted to do right and have tried every day, but I keep doing wrong. I am just discouraged and cannot try any more."

It is not easy to obey God's rules, and no one could walk in the right way an

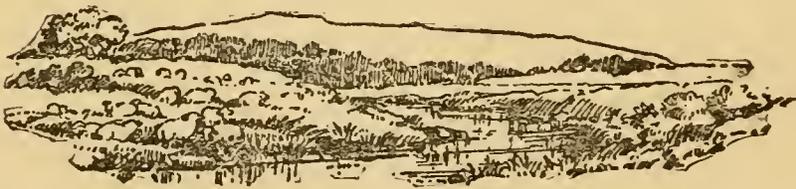
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hour alone. But because their Heavenly Father is always near to help the fainting ones, to give strength to those who are weak, and courage to those who feel that they must give up trying, even the smallest children may “behave wisely in a perfect way.”<sup>1</sup>

Isaiah said, “The everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary. He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might He increaseth strength.”<sup>2</sup> So the weakest child who loves God may say, “I am not afraid to try to walk in the right way, for my Heavenly Father is with me; and when I am tired and faint He will give me back my strength.” HE RESTORETH MY SOUL.

<sup>1</sup> Psalm ci. 2.

<sup>2</sup> Isaiah xl. 28, 29.





## VI. GUIDANCE IN RIGHT PATHS

THE wisest man who ever lived says, "A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches,"<sup>1</sup> and he also says, "Even a child is known by his doings."<sup>2</sup>

I once heard a man tell a carriage dealer whom he met on the street, that he wanted to buy a carriage of a certain kind. The dealer said, "I have just the sort that you want."

"Who made it?" asked the man. The dealer told him.

<sup>1</sup> Proverbs xxii. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Proverbs xx. 11.

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“I will take it,” he said, as soon as he knew the price.

I was very much surprised, and said to him afterward, “How did you happen to buy a carriage that you had not seen? I should think you would want to look at it so as to be sure that it is all right.”

“Oh no,” he said, “I know it will be right. I know the man who made that carriage, and he could not make a poor one if he tried.” You see that carriage maker had a *good name* in his business.

Every one who does any kind of work has, among people who know him, either a good or a bad name as a workman. Children in school are known as good or poor scholars according to the way they do their work; that is, they “are known by their doings”: and the ones who have a good name are trusted and honored, and make their teachers and parents happy.

Some people were once riding in a stage coach through the Rocky Mountains. The night was dark and rainy, and the roads were very rough, so that the coach rocked from side to side, and the people inside were very much frightened, expecting

every moment to be upset. A little girl began to sob, and even grown people were ready to cry with fear. But a gentleman said, "There is not any serious danger. Our driver is the best in the mountains. He is very careful, has been over the road hundreds of times, and has never had an accident. This is a bad night, but with such a driver I feel sure we will get through safely."

When they heard this the passengers were comforted right away. They were ready to trust a driver who had such a good name, and he did take them safely to their stopping-place.

We may be very certain that David had a good name as a shepherd, and that any of his father's neighbors would have been willing to trust their sheep to his care. He must have had the name of being kind, wise, brave, careful and strong. And yet he could not always know how to choose the best way to go. Suppose he came to a place where the road branched off in two ways as it does in our picture; if one looked just as safe as the other, and he had never been over either, he could not

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tell which would be the better for him to take. If a great many wild animals had come at once after his sheep, he might not have been strong enough to drive them away, or to keep them from killing some of his flock.

No earthly shepherd, however wise and loving, could always know just what it would be best to do for his sheep; and the strongest would some time grow weak and sick. But the Lord, in whose care David wished to be, could see all the way that he must take, from the beginning to the end. Not only all the goodness but all the wisdom in the world is His, so that He is called All-wise; He has so much power that Almighty is one of His names; and the Bible says, God is Love. David had learned to trust his earthly father, and many people that he knew who had a good name; but how much more could he trust his Heavenly Father, his Shepherd, whose name is so great and holy! Whenever David thought about the Lord's name, he would think, "My Guide knows all things, has all power, and loves me with an everlasting love; He could not lead me in any

wrong way ;” and because he knew this, he said, HE LEADETH ME IN THE PATHS OF RIGHTEOUSNESS FOR HIS NAME’S SAKE.

If a flock of lambs and sheep were wise enough to tell what they wanted, and could choose their own shepherd, they would certainly be very careful in selecting one. Months at a time when they were away on the hills, their safety and comfort would depend on their guide, for they are more helpless than most other animals and cannot take care of themselves at all.

But lambs and sheep cannot choose whom they will follow. They must take the shepherd that is put over them, whether he is wise and good, or careless and unloving.

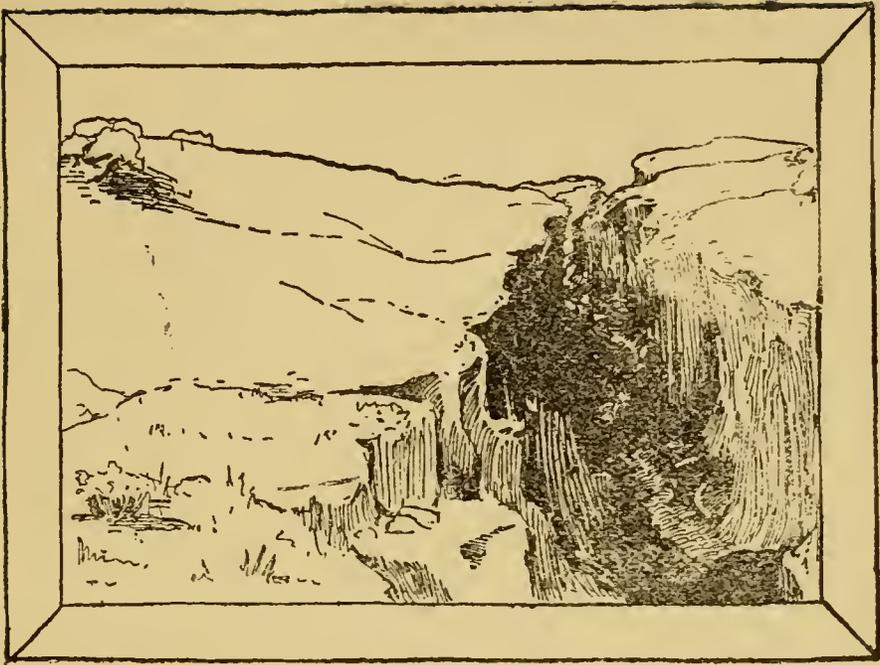
For children, who, like the tender lambs, need constant care, and cannot find the right way alone, there is only one Shepherd who is wise and great and loving enough to lead them safely. Thousands of children have heard His call, and are following Him. They and all who pray as David once did, “ For Thy name’s sake

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lead me, and guide me",<sup>1</sup> may joyfully say each day, HE LEADETH ME IN THE PATHS OF RIGHTEOUSNESS FOR HIS NAME'S SAKE.

<sup>1</sup> Psalm xxxi. 3.





## VII. COURAGE IN DARK PLACES

A PARTY of missionaries were in a terrible storm on the China Sea. The ship rolled, and the great waves broke over it until even the captain thought that the ship and all on board would be lost. Early in the evening all the lights went out because they could not be kept burning when the ship was tossed about so violently. This darkness made the night seem more fearful. But the ship weathered the storm, and when the daylight came again

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the wind went down, the sea became more quiet. Through all that night one little girl on board did not show any sign of fear, and when the danger was over some one asked her how she could be so brave. "Why," she said, "as long as the lights were there I could see my father near me, and after the lights went out he held my hand, so I knew he was there, and I am never afraid where he is."

When two mountains are as near together as these in our picture, the valley between gets very little sunshine, and to any one going into it on a warm, bright day, it would seem both cold and dark. In Scotland there is such a valley which the people call the Pass. Near it lived a shepherd who for thirty years had watched his flocks and pastured them on one side or the other of the mountains through which the Pass gave a road. This man knew about the Lord, David's Shepherd, and all his life he loved and followed Him.

But there came a day when Donald was too sick to go out with his sheep, and when the doctor said that he would never be able to go again. Then Donald's

friends found that he was afraid. It seemed very strange that a man who had followed the Good Shepherd so many years should have any fear. The minister could not understand it, but when he talked with Donald he found that he really was afraid, so he said,

“Donald, have you ever taken your sheep through the Pass on a sunshiny day?”

“Many times,” was the answer.

“How did they act?”

“They were afraid.”

“Why were they afraid?”

“Because it was dark in the Pass.”

“What did they do?”

“They crowded close to me, so close I could hardly walk,” said Donald, smiling as he remembered it.

“What makes it so dark in the Pass?”

“The shadow of the mountain.”

“While you were in the shadow with your sheep, did you think that the sun had stopped shining?”

“No, I was sure it had not.”

“You knew it was shining brightly when you went into the shadow, and that when you came out on the other side you

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would find it shining there. Donald, why can you not be as wise as your sheep were? You are in the shadow now because you are passing through a valley. You led your sheep through the Pass because you wanted to take them to a better pasture; and so the Lord, your Shepherd, is leading you to a far better place through the valley of the shadow of death. It seems dark to you, but you have been living all your life in the bright sunshine of God's love, and in a little while you will be where it will shine more brightly than ever. Why will you not do as your sheep did with you, and get close to your Shepherd? If you do that you will not be afraid any more."

Donald saw then that he had been thinking only about the dark, and had forgotten the Leader, who was with him even there; so he went very near to his loving Heavenly Father in prayer, asking for help in his weakness, and as soon as he did this he found the darkness growing less and his fear all gone. In a little while he had passed beyond the shadow of the valley into the happy home that

the Lord had ready for him, where there never will be fear, or pain, or shadows of any kind.<sup>1</sup>

David had seen his sheep many times in dark places when they were afraid unless they could hear his voice and know he was near; and the way they trusted him, even in such places, taught him to trust the Lord, his Shepherd, always and everywhere. He knew that some day he would have to pass through the valley of death; but he knew that his Heavenly Father would be leading him as he walked that way, and with Him so near he would not be afraid: and that is the reason he could say, **YEA, THOUGH I WALK THROUGH THE VALLEY OF THE SHADOW OF DEATH, I WILL FEAR NO EVIL; FOR THOU ART WITH ME.**

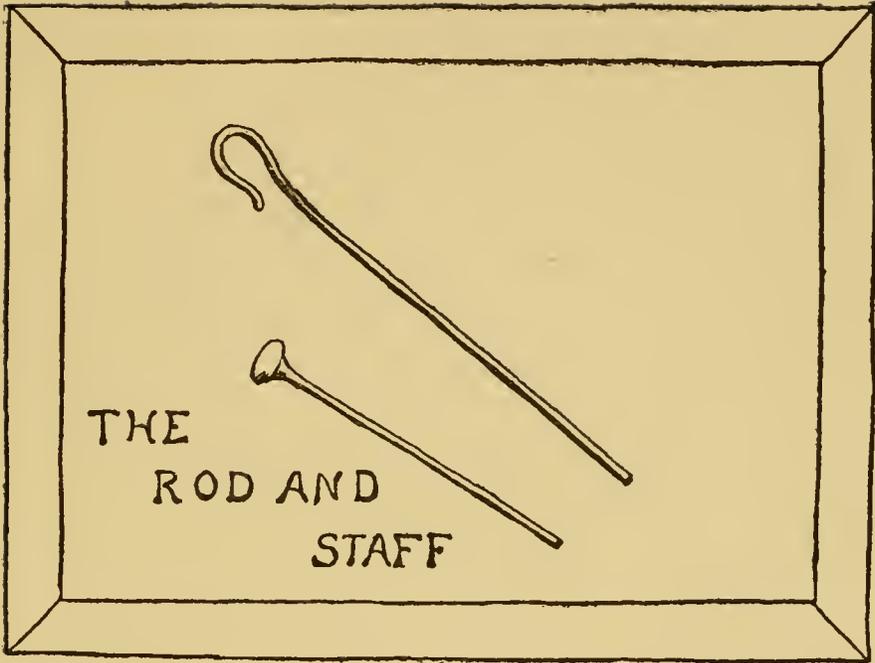
This is a beautiful part of David's Psalm, and one that we would like every one to know about, because some day all the people who are living in the world must go through the valley of the shadow of death, and they would be so much happier if they could know that the darkness

<sup>1</sup> Revelation xxi. 4.

## 40 The Shepherd Psalm for Children

is only a shadow, and that they need not have the least fear if they are where their Heavenly Father is. Though they cannot see Him, He will be near, and then, even the most timid can say, **YEA, THOUGH I WALK THROUGH THE VALLEY OF THE SHADOW OF DEATH, I WILL FEAR NO EVIL; FOR THOU ART WITH ME.**





#### VIII. A VOICE IN THE HEART

WHENEVER David went out with his sheep he carried a rod and staff, such as we see in our picture. The rod with its heavy end was used to protect the sheep from wild animals, and you can see how much easier it would be for a shepherd to frighten away or kill a lion, bear or wolf with such a club as that, than it would be for him to do it without any weapon at all.

The staff he used in many different

## 42 The Shepherd Psalm for Children

ways. It was long, and if he saw a little lamb turning from the right path, he would stretch out the staff to guide it back. But sometimes the lamb would not obey, or even come when the shepherd called, but would run away, and not seeing the danger, fall over the edge of a steep place, where it would lie frightened and unable to help itself. Then the shepherd, reaching down with his staff, could hook it gently around the lamb and draw it back to safety. When they were at home and went into a fold every night, the shepherd held his staff at the gate of the fold, so low down that each one of the flock as it passed under would touch it. In this way the shepherd counted them and if one was missing he would go to look for it, after shutting the rest up safely in the fold.

If the sheep could have understood, it would have been a comfort to know that their shepherd had something besides his two hands to protect them with, however strong he might be. Any lamb who had fallen over steep rocks would be glad to think that his shepherd had a staff with

which he could reach and draw him back. And if some lamb that had wandered from the flock when trying to have his own way could know about such things at all, he would think, as he lay out in the darkness and cold alone, "When the rest of the flock pass under my shepherd's staff as they go into the fold, he will miss me, and then he will come to look for me," and that thought would comfort the little lamb who had done wrong and was sorry, and very anxious to get back to his kind shepherd's care and to the safe fold again.

Sheep and lambs could not understand much about these things, but David knew all about the rod and the staff, and had used both many times. He knew that Satan was always watching, trying to destroy those who were following the True Shepherd; but he knew, too, that the Lord's strength is like a mighty rod, which protects all who love Him, and it was a comfort to David to know that he could trust in that strength much more than the sheep could trust in the shepherd's rod.

Do you remember the story of Daniel,

## 44 The Shepherd Psalm for Children

and how Satan tried to make him stop praying to God?<sup>1</sup> He could not have kept on in his own strength, but the Lord helped him with His strength so that he was able to do what was right even though he knew he would be put in a den of lions for doing it.

Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego trusted in God, and in His strength they were brave enough to say, "Be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up."<sup>2</sup> They were thrown into a fiery furnace, but the Lord whom they served was with them there.

Satan wants to ruin the souls of people by getting them to do wrong, but God's power protects and saves those under His care, from the evil that Satan tries to do them.

When a child starts to do wrong he hears what seems like a little voice in his heart saying, "Don't do that! That is not right." If he goes on and does the wrong thing, he hears that same voice, saying, "You have done wrong! Are you not

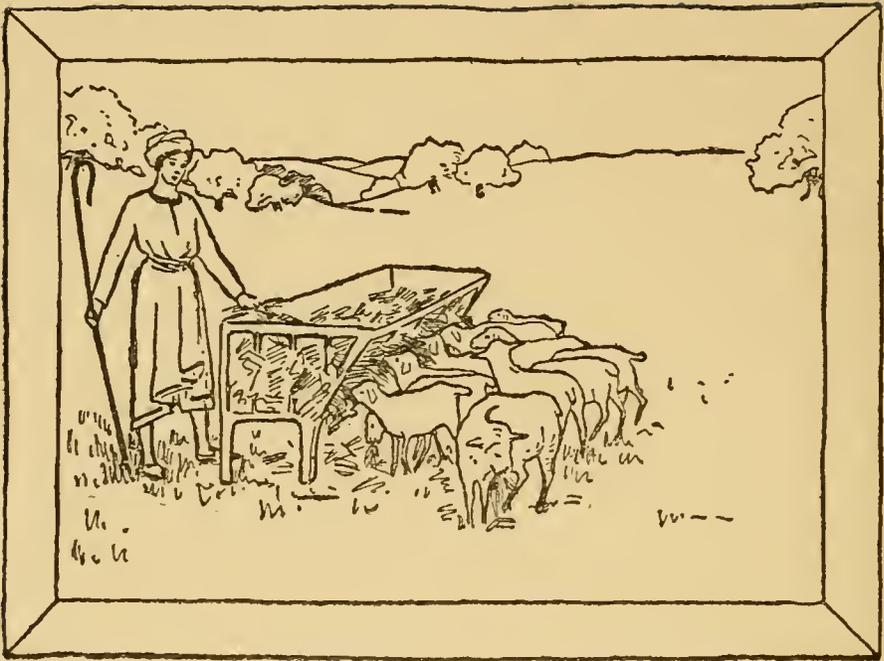
<sup>1</sup> Daniel vi.

<sup>2</sup> Daniel iii. 18.

sorry? Go and tell your mother about it, and promise her that you will not do that again." That voice God has put in every child's heart to do for him what the shepherd's staff does for the sheep: to keep him from turning to the wrong way, and to bring him back from the wrong way when he is disobedient.

David had such a voice in his heart, and knew his kind Heavenly Father was using it all the time to keep him in the right way, or bring him back to it; and because he liked to think about this, and about his Shepherd's strength, he said, "THY ROD AND THY STAFF THEY COMFORT ME."

All who are glad that their Heavenly Father will protect them from harm, and guide them every day in the right way, who like to hear and obey the voice in their hearts, and to know that God has put it there, think just as David did about these things, and they too can tell what they feel by saying, "THY ROD AND THY STAFF THEY COMFORT ME."



## IX. A FEAST IN SAFETY

A CERTAIN shepherd had a pasture up on the side of a mountain where he often took his sheep. Around it on three sides were very thick woods in which were many wild animals. Generally they came out of their hiding-places only at night to look for food, but at certain times in the year they were so hungry that they came to the edge of the forest in the daytime, ready to seize and carry off any sheep or lamb that came near where they were. The shepherd knew that then it was not

safe for his flock to wander about the field, and yet they must be fed. So he made a crib something like the one we have in our picture, and filling it with grass called his sheep and lambs around it; and there they could eat in safety, for he was near to protect each one. The wild animals looking out from the woods could see them eating, but dared not come near to harm them. No doubt the sheep would rather nibble the grass where it grows, but when their enemies were so near they would be glad to have it put where they could eat it without being in the least afraid.

Perhaps David was thinking of something like this when he wrote, "THOU PREPAREST A TABLE BEFORE ME IN THE PRESENCE OF MINE ENEMIES." God had prepared a table for him filled with His goodness, His mercy and His love, and though Satan would not want him to have any of these things, he could not keep him or take him away from the feast.

But David was more to his Heavenly Father than a sheep is to his shepherd. A sheep cannot talk to the shepherd, but David could and did talk with God many

## 48 The Shepherd Psalm for Children

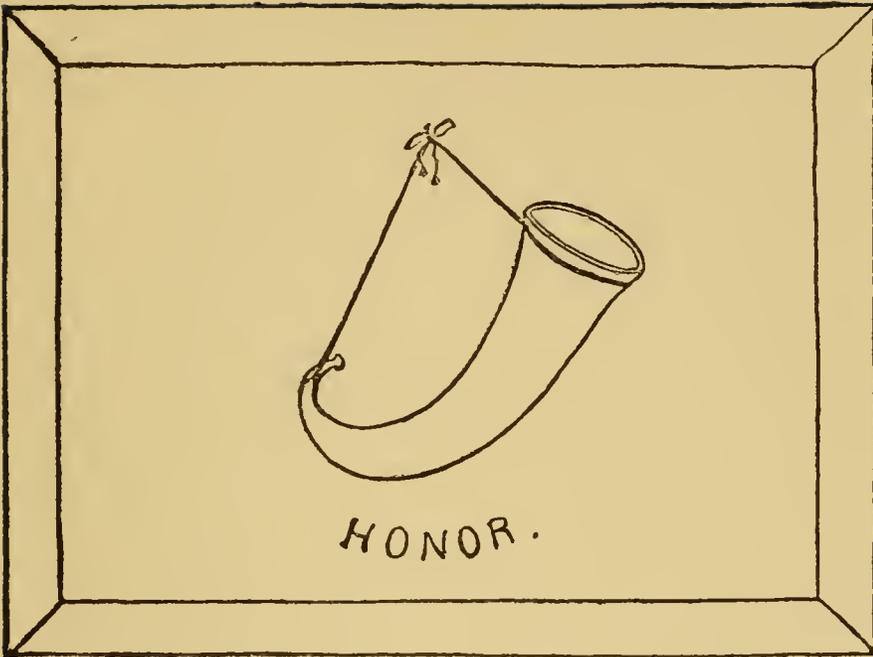
times every day. So when he thought of God's table spread for him, he thought about it not so much as the food a shepherd prepares for his sheep, but rather as a feast made ready for a friend,—a friend who could understand the giver's kindness, speak his thanks and tell his love.

It is wonderful to think of David as being loved and cared for by the Lord, his Shepherd, as an earthly shepherd cares for his sheep. But it is much more wonderful to know that David could also be God's friend, and talk with Him.

God's table is spread all the time for His friends. Jesus said, "Ye are my friends if ye do whatsoever I command you,"<sup>1</sup> and all who obey the Lord are His friends, and have a place at this feast. Satan tries to keep all mercy, goodness, and love away from every one, but each guest at the Lord's table will have plenty of everything good, and can say to the Giver of every good and every perfect gift,<sup>2</sup> "THOU PREPAREST A TABLE BEFORE ME IN THE PRESENCE OF MINE ENEMIES."

<sup>1</sup> John xv. 14.

<sup>2</sup> James i. 17.



## X. HONOR

THERE are many different ways of showing honor to people who deserve it. In that book of the Bible which tells the story of Esther and is called by her name, there is a story also about Mordecai, a Jew, the cousin of Queen Esther. He had a high office in the service of Ahasuerus, the king, and he found out that two of the chamberlains who had become angry about something were planning to kill the king. This Mordecai told to Esther, and she told

## 50 The Shepherd Psalm for Children

the king; and so his life was saved and the wicked men were put to death. Generally any one who did such a service as this for a king was rewarded in some way, but Mordecai was not. The king seems to have forgotten about it until one night when he could not sleep and had the book brought in which had been written down all the things that had happened during his reign, that it might be read to him. When the part was reached that told about Mordecai and the two men who wanted to murder the king, Ahasuerus said, "What honor and dignity hath been done to Mordecai for this?" The servants answered, "There is nothing done for him."<sup>1</sup> Then the king ordered his chief prince to put some of the royal garments upon Mordecai, place the crown upon his head, mount him upon one of the king's own horses and lead the horse through the city, saying to every one as they went along, "Thus shall it be done to the man whom the king delighteth to honor."

Every American boy and girl knows the story of Hobson, and the dangerous task

<sup>1</sup> Esther vi. 3.

he and the men with him undertook. All the men on the different ships of the fleet knew what was going to be done, probably none thought those who went would live to see home and friends again, and yet they wanted to go. Only a few could be chosen, and all felt that it would be a great honor to be among those few. It was an honor, as it always is to be trusted to do a hard thing. When Hobson came back to this country people everywhere showed that they honored him for what he had done; but the greatest honor he ever had, or could have, was when his country chose him to do the work that has made his name famous.

The Lord chose David to do a hard thing when He let him, a mere boy, try to kill a great giant whose body was covered with armor; and in being chosen for this work he was honored above every one else in his nation.

I was once invited to a dinner party to meet a lady whom I had never seen but wanted very much to know, having read several books that she had written. At the house there were so many strange peo-

## 52 The Shepherd Psalm for Children

ple that I could not tell on going into the parlor which one was she. But in a moment we went into the dining-room, and then I found out right away. No one pointed her out to me, but I knew that the guest for whom the dinner was given, the one to whom special honor was to be shown, would sit at the right hand of the person who gave the dinner. So, when I saw who sat in that place I knew she was the one who wrote the books that had given me so much pleasure.

In the time when David lived they had a different way of showing honor to a guest. When all the people who had been invited were seated at the table, the host would go to the one whom he wished most to honor, and pour some oil on his head from a horn such as we have in the picture. So by anointing his head with oil he said to all the people there, "This man I have reason to honor, and I wish you to honor him too."

You remember that when David said, "THOU PREPAREST A TABLE BEFORE ME IN THE PRESENCE OF MINE ENEMIES," he thought of God as his Friend, as well as

his Shepherd; a Friend who had invited him to a feast, and whose guest he was. But he was even more than that; he was an honored guest, and that is what he means when he says, THOU ANOINTEST MY HEAD WITH OIL.

The Lord, David's Shepherd, is called in the Bible the "King of kings." He is the King as well as the Heavenly Father of those who serve Him. He puts His own garment on those whom He honors, "the robe of righteousness,"<sup>1</sup> and He crowns them with "loving-kindness and tender mercies."<sup>2</sup> Mordecai was the only one whom King Ahasuerus delighted to honor by letting him wear the king's robe and crown, but the King of kings honors all who love Him, so that each one has the same right that David had to say, THOU ANOINTEST MY HEAD WITH OIL.

<sup>1</sup> Isaiah lxi. 10.

<sup>2</sup> Psalm ciii. 4.





## XI. BLESSINGS

HELEN came into the house one day with a very cross, discontented look on her face, and throwing herself in a chair she said, "Grace Colgate has everything nice, and I never have anything! Her father gave her a boat last summer, and it is the prettiest row-boat on the lake, and now he has given her a pony and cart, and I can't even have a bicycle."

"Grace's father has plenty of money and can give her many things that your father

cannot afford," answered her mother, gently, "but you ought to be glad that your friend has these pleasures even if you cannot have them. Come, now, let us see how many you have! There is an empty glass and a pitcher of water. We will call the glass your life, and as we think of blessings you can pour in the water, and we will see how full your life really is of good things!"

Helen was amused with the idea, but as she went to the table she said she was sure that the glass would not be half full. As her home, food, clothing, school and friends were spoken of, Helen poured some water into the glass, but suddenly she stopped and said, "Why, I have *you*, mother!" and quickly filling the glass to the brim, she added, "There isn't room to show how glad I am that I have you," and throwing her arms around her mother's neck she asked to be forgiven for having been so unthankful. After they had talked it all over together, Helen said, "When I was thinking about Grace's pony and boat I thought she ought to be a very happy girl, but now when I remember that she has no

## 56 The Shepherd Psalm for Children

mother everything seems different. She has blessings, but the ones I have are greater.”

The Bible says, “A faithful man shall abound with blessings.”<sup>1</sup> David was a faithful man, and he had so many blessings that he could not tell how many. He had more than his life full, he thought, so he had to say MY CUP RUNNETH OVER.

But those who love God now and are faithful to Him, have one blessing in their lives that David did not have in his; the greatest Gift that God ever gave to this world. The verse which tells about it says, “God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”<sup>2</sup>

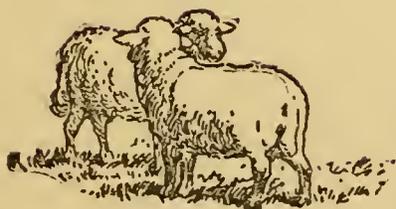
It is easier for those who want to follow the Lord, David’s Shepherd, to do so now than it was for David, because Jesus has lived on the earth to show the way; and it was Jesus who taught all people that He and His Father wanted the children to come, as well as the grown people.<sup>3</sup> So

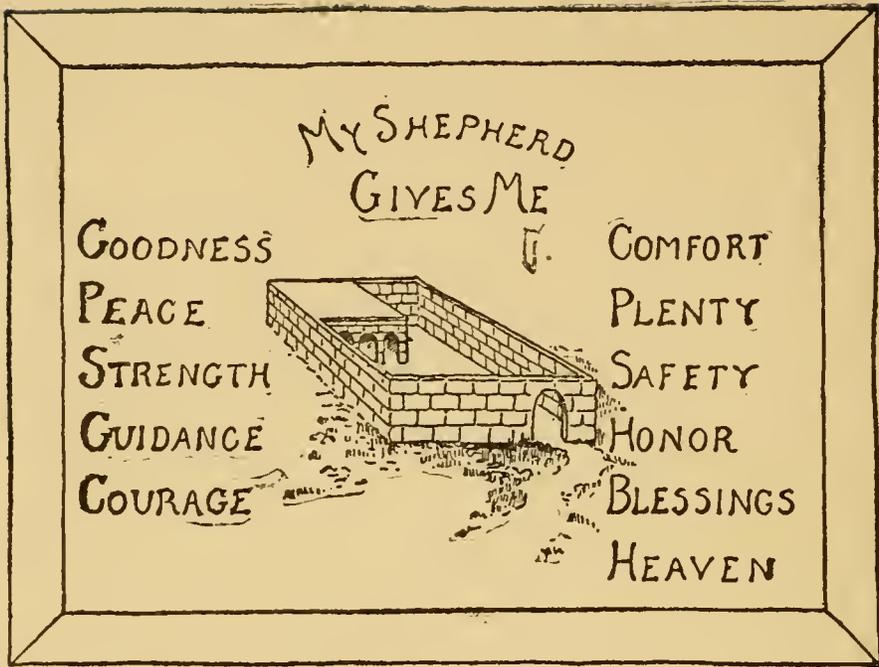
<sup>1</sup> Proverbs xxviii. 20.

<sup>2</sup> John iii. 16.

<sup>3</sup> Matthew xix. 14; Mark x. 14; Luke xviii. 16.

with this great Gift of God's love, and all the other blessings in their lives, all of God's children ought to say even more gladly than David did, MY CUP RUNNETH OVER.





## XII. A HOME IN HEAVEN

IN this Psalm David has told us of many things that the Lord, his Shepherd, gave him. First of all David knew that the Lord would give him all the *goodness* he needed, and because he could have it at any time, he was like sheep who are lying down with grass all around them. Often he had hard things to bear that would have troubled him very much if the Lord had not been leading him. But as He

was, David found *peace*, which was like the quiet where still waters flow, and he tells us about it by saying, HE LEADETH ME BESIDE THE STILL WATERS. Often David fainted when trying to walk in the right way, and had no strength left to be good with any longer. Then his watchful, loving Shepherd gave him *strength* so that he could go on, and that made David so happy that he was very glad when he said, HE RESTORETH MY SOUL.

Some animals, when they have been over a certain road many times learn the way so that they are able to go alone; others can find their way to one place from another even though they have never been that way, by a power which God has given them. But sheep can do neither of these things; they can never be trusted to go alone, but must be guided and led always. People who want to walk in the right way must have a Shepherd to guide them, because they are like sheep about this and cannot find the way at all alone. David needed *guidance*, and knew the Lord would guide him, and because of the names by which his Shepherd was known, he said,

## 60 The Shepherd Psalm for Children

HE LEADETH ME IN THE PATHS OF RIGHTEOUSNESS FOR HIS NAME'S SAKE.

People are very often afraid in the dark, but David did not think he would be; in fact he felt so sure he would not be that he tells us, YEA, THOUGH I WALK THROUGH THE VALLEY OF THE SHADOW OF DEATH, I WILL FEAR NO EVIL. But he did not say this because he was such a brave man that he thought he could go through the valley alone without fear. He expected to have *courage*, but not of himself. Like every good thing that he had, it would come from his Shepherd, and the reason he would have no fear is because his Shepherd would be with him.

It gave David *comfort* to think of his Shepherd's great strength and of the voice that David could hear each day in his heart warning him not to go into wrong ways. At the table of his Lord he found *plenty*, and though enemies might be near he knew his Shepherd would be nearer, and so he would have *safety*. The Lord, his friend as well as his Shepherd, had given David *honor*, too, and so many *blessings* that his life could not hold them all, which

is just the way God has promised to bless those who keep His commandments.<sup>1</sup>

All these gifts from the Lord David had found in his life when he wrote this Psalm ; and because he meant to keep right on following where the Lord led, he felt sure he would always have them, and so he said, SURELY GOODNESS AND MERCY SHALL FOLLOW ME ALL THE DAYS OF MY LIFE.

When David was away from home with his flock, the sheep and lambs had to spend the nights out of doors in all kinds of weather, because there was no fold into which they could go. But when they came back home they would find there a fold such as we have in our picture, with its thick walls and strong gate to keep them safe, and a covered place for rainy weather. Do you not think they would be very glad to get into the fold ?

David had something better than coming home to such a fold to think about. David's Shepherd, the Lord, has a beautiful place ready for all the people who love Him. It is a City with walls and twelve gates. God's book says that the founda-

<sup>1</sup> Malachi iii. 10.

## 62 The Shepherd Psalm for Children

tions of the walls are garnished with all manner of precious stones, and the gates are of pearl.<sup>1</sup> Into that home no sorrow, nor tears, nor pain can ever enter, but there will be songs, and joy, and gladness forever. David knew that this home was waiting for him just the other side of the valley through which he would pass some day, and he called it **THE HOUSE OF THE LORD**. You and I call it heaven.

So you see he was talking of his life here when he said, **SURELY GOODNESS AND MERCY SHALL FOLLOW ME ALL THE DAYS OF MY LIFE**; and he was thinking about his home in heaven when he added, **AND I WILL DWELL IN THE HOUSE OF THE LORD FOREVER**.

Because these gifts from the Heavenly Father are not for David alone, the words in the heading of this chapter are printed so that each one who reads them may say,—not “David’s Shepherd gave him,” but “My Shepherd gives me” all these things. Is it not a happy thought that every one may have such blessings? Of course only those who love the Lord and obey Him

<sup>1</sup> Revelation xxi. 19-21.

can have them, but He wants every one to follow Him, and all may if they will. So in ending the study of this Psalm, I will say to you what Paul once wrote to some people whom he loved very much and wanted to help: "Be ye followers of God as dear children."<sup>1</sup>

Then, if you are His followers, these last words of the Psalm will tell how happy the years that are coming to you in this life will be, and how sure you are, when they are over, to have a home in that City which has no need of the sun nor the moon to shine in it, for the glory of the Lord is the light of it:<sup>2</sup> SURELY GOODNESS AND MERCY SHALL FOLLOW ME ALL THE DAYS OF MY LIFE; AND I WILL DWELL IN THE HOUSE OF THE LORD FOREVER.

<sup>1</sup> Ephesians v. 1.

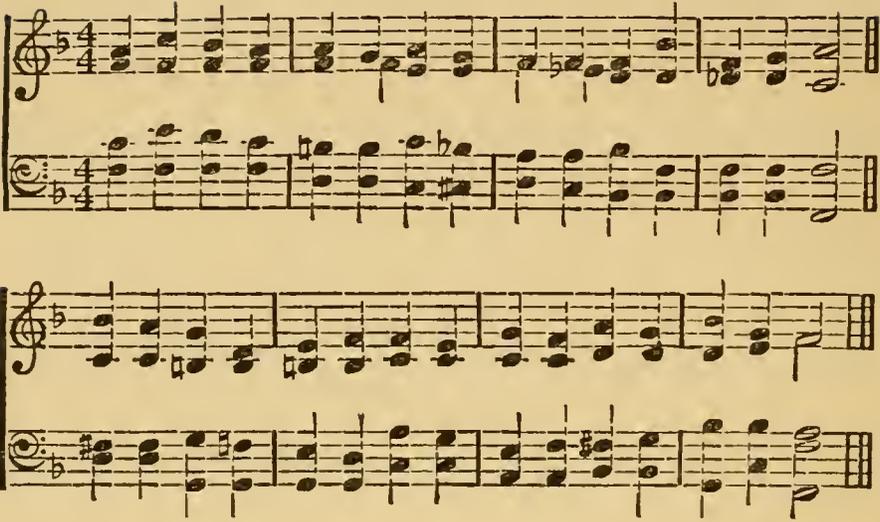
<sup>2</sup> Revelation xxi. 23.



# Like Obedient Lambs.

J. L. B.

J. W. C. POOL.



Like obedient lambs, who follow  
Where their shepherd leads each day,  
We will follow God, our Leader,  
Gladly His commands obey.

With God's goodness all around us,  
We no want can ever see;  
When we walk in darkest shadow,  
Close beside us He will be.

Goodness, mercy, honor, blessings,  
God will give, if we are true:  
And a home with Him forever  
When our journey here is through.







# Suggestions to Teachers

WHO WISH TO USE

## *The Shepherd Psalm for Children*<sup>1</sup>

AS A BASIS FOR

### Oral Instruction

BY JOSEPHINE L. BALDWIN

THE plan of preparing an explanation of "*The Shepherd Psalm for Children*" originated in a desire to put it in such shape that teachers of primary and intermediate classes, and those of Junior Epworth Leagues and Junior Christian Endeavorers, would find it suggestive when teaching the Psalm as a lesson supplemental to the regular international lesson, or to the topic of the day. Later it seemed wise to so change the character of the presentation that the book could be used as a gift book to be put directly into the hands of the child. This made necessary the introduction of various Bible and other stories in order to maintain the interest of a child reading alone, which it would not be essential or wise to introduce when teaching the Psalm orally.

The purpose of this leaflet is to outline the general method which the writer would use in teach-

<sup>1</sup> Copyright, 1899, by Fleming H. Revell Company.

## ii            Suggestions to Teachers

ing, and to intimate what portions of each chapter of the book as printed she would omit in oral instruction. These are not expected to be taken as anything but suggestions; for no work of this kind should be slavishly followed by individual teachers. Each one will naturally adapt her presentation to her own class, and draw illustrations from her own experience and reading where the ones given in the book do not serve her purpose.

Primary unions, where it has not been done, will find the teaching of this Psalm as a supplemental lesson for five minutes each session until it is finished, exceedingly helpful to the teachers. It should be taught in every primary class at least once in two years.

In this arrangement it is intended to teach the Psalm in twelve lessons of about five minutes each. It contains so many distinct ideas that children could not grasp any if several were presented at once; and this is the reason for dividing it up into such small parts, and making it extend through a whole quarter of the year's work.

By far the best method of making the children understand about a shepherd and his sheep, and fixing the attention on the special subject of each day's lesson, is by means of such simple black-board illustrations as are placed at the head of the chapters. They should be on the board before the school opens, as the children will then talk

## The Shepherd Psalm for Children iii

together about the picture ; those that understand what they see will explain to those that do not, the whole class will become familiar with the details, and will not have their attention distracted from the lesson to the picture, as would be the case if it were seen for the first at the moment when it is used in the teaching.

If the teacher positively cannot draw even a simple picture, and cannot find some friend to do it for her, by watching magazines and papers she can find pictures of shepherd and sheep, of "still waters" and "green pastures," and other scenes similar to those in the book. Cut out and mounted attractively, or even unmounted and pinned on the board, these may serve the purpose ; but black-board sketches would be better, even though crudely drawn.

*If the class is familiar with the sand board,* many of the lessons could be illustrated by using it with florist's moss for grass, and such trees, sheep and shepherd as can be bought in any toy store. But to a class not accustomed to the sand board, its introduction to them in so fascinating a form would make it certain that they would not learn anything from the lesson taught, because wholly occupied with the object.

A valuable aid toward the committing of the words of the Psalm to memory by those who have not learned them, is in the use of pictorial

## iv            Suggestions to Teachers

cards which contain the entire Psalm, but are divided into ten parts by gilt lines upon which they are to be cut apart.<sup>1</sup> When the first sentence is taught the part containing it is given to each child, with a blank card the size of the complete pictorial card. As the teaching progresses, they receive other parts and paste them in regular order on the large card. The words, which are the subjects of the tenth and eleventh chapters in this book, will be found on one card, but should be taught separately, and the card given with the second one. When the Psalm is finished the scholars will have an appropriate picture formed of the separate parts, each of which seems complete in itself. The giving of these cards is an incidental stimulus to good attendance, and makes it quite certain that none able to attend will miss the teaching of any week.

Since there are so many ways in which we can show to children the tender love of Christ, "the Good Shepherd," is it not best to make this beautiful revelation of God's care, guidance and loving kindness refer solely to the Heavenly Father? Many who are now teachers have said that their conception of God in childhood was that of an avenging deity, "angry with the wicked every day," but from whose wrath and punishments

<sup>1</sup> These may be obtained of the Fleming H. Revell Company. ("Dissected cards for the 23d Psalm"—25 cents for a package of 10—3 cents apiece.)

## The Shepherd Psalm for Children v

Christ was ever trying to shield them. No child in this day is apt to have so extreme an impression made upon him, but there is danger along this line which may be avoided by using this Psalm to bring early to the minds of the little ones a just conception of the Lord, who said of old to His servant, "I have loved thee with an everlasting love."

With intermediate classes or mission bands, and other organizations whose members are above the primary age, many of such illustrations as should be omitted for the little children, might be used. The Scripture verses and references, inserted to stimulate the child who reads to look for them, and so become more familiar with the Book, will be of little use in teaching small children, except where such verses are already familiar to them.

For children eight years of age and under, in the second chapter the reference to Goliath should be omitted entirely, as the great interest that children always have in the story would hold their attention to it to the exclusion of the real lesson to be impressed. In the sixth chapter the story of the carriage maker has too much to do with business to be understood perhaps by such young children. In the seventh, the story of the ship should be left out, as that of the shepherd is as much as can be comprehended, and that alone will best illustrate the text. The references to

Daniel and to the three men in the fiery furnace in the eighth, and to Hobson in the tenth, should not be used for the same reason as that given for omitting the story of Goliath. Of course in this, as in all other primary teaching, no fact should be directly stated that can be drawn from the children by questions. These lessons will be found to afford unusual scope for questioning, and lessons presented in that form will have a vivacity and interest which can never be given to a printed page.

In the third chapter will be found the quotations, "a whole skyful of goodness," and "goodness enough to be good with all the time." These are from Miss Peabody's "Lectures to Kindergartners," and the lecture in which they are found, "A Psychological Observation" should be read by every primary Sunday-school teacher. It can scarcely be equalled as a pattern for the presentation of a new religious idea to a child.

The hymn in the back of the book embodies the chief thoughts in the teaching, and is intended for use in connection with it. For the reason mentioned, I would not have the children sing "Saviour, Like a Shepherd Lead Us," while learning this Psalm. If another hymn is desired, there is a very good one, especially for children above the primary age, in "Welcome Songs for the Sabbath-school," No. 1, page 7.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Published by Fleming H. Revell Company, price 15 cents.

# For Work Among Children

**Practical Primary Plans.** For Sabbath School Teachers.

By Israel P. Black. Illustrated with diagrams. 16mo, cloth, \$1.00.

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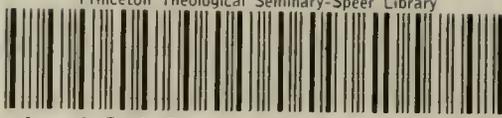
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