

from the brink of eternity, and in such a light, I can assure your correspondents that, if they know the Lord, they will regret, as I have done, the want of more caution in speaking of the doings and motives of other men. Let us do our part towards our Dissenting brethren according to the Scriptures, however they may treat us. We shall be no losers. Perhaps we may gain those who are brethren indeed to think more as we do. At least they will love us, and cease to speak evil of us.

If our church is to fall under the iron foot of despotism, God grant that it may fall reformed and purified; pure in its doctrine, government, discipline, and worship; scriptural in its spirit; missionary in its aim, and holy in its practice; a truly golden candlestick; a pleasant vine. If the daughter of Zion must be made a widow, and sit desolate on the ground, grant her latest cry may be that of her once suffering, now exalted Head: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."—I remain, dear sir, yours, etc.

ST PETER'S, DUNDEE, *July 6, 1842.*

TO THE LAMBS OF THE FLOCK

"He shall feed his flock like a shepherd; He shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom."—ISAIAH 40:11.

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

I. JESUS HAS A FLOCK

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

(1.) *Christ's flock is a little flock.*—Hear what Jesus says: “Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom.” Luke 12:32. Pray to be among the little flock. Look at the world—eight hundred millions of men, women, and children, of different countries, colour, and language, all journeying to the judgment-seat! Is this Christ’s flock? Ah, no! Five hundred millions never heard the sweet name of Jesus, and of the rest the most see no beauty in the Rose of Sharon. Christ’s is a little flock. Look at this town. What crowds press along the streets on a market-day! What a large flock is here! Is this the flock of Christ? No. It is to be feared that most of these are not the brothers and sisters of Christ; they do not bear his likeness; they do not follow the Lamb now, and will not follow Him in eternity. Look round the Sabbath schools. What a number of young faces are there! How many beaming eyes! How many precious souls! Is this the flock of Christ? No, no. The most of you have hard and stony hearts; the most of you love pleasure more than God; the most of you love sin, and lightly esteem Christ. “What a pity it is that they do not a’ come to Christ, for they would be sic happy!” said one of yourselves. I could weep when I think how many of you will live lives of sin, and die deaths of horror, and spend an eternity in hell. Beloved children, pray that you may be like the one lily among many thorns—that you may be the few lambs in the midst of a world of wolves.

(2.) *Christ's sheep are marked sheep.*—In almost every flock the sheep are all marked in order that the shepherd may know them. The mark is often made with tar on the woolly back of the sheep. Sometimes it is the first letter of the owner’s name. The use of the mark is, that they may not be lost when they wander among other sheep. So it is with the flock of Jesus. Every sheep of his has two marks. *One mark is made with the blood of Jesus.* Every sheep and lamb in Christ’s flock was once guilty and defiled with sin, altogether become filthy. But every one of them has been drawn to the blood of Jesus and washed there. They are all like sheep “come up from the

washing.” They can all say, “Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood,” Rev. 1:5. Have you this mark? Look and see. You can never be in heaven unless you have it. Every one there has washed his robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Rev. 7:14. *Another mark is made by the Holy Spirit.* This is not a mark which you can see outside, like the mark on the white wool of the sheep. It is deep, deep in the bosom, where the eye of man cannot look. It is A NEW HEART. “A new heart also will I give you,” Ezek. 36:26. This is the seal of the Holy Spirit, which He gives to all them that believe. With infinite power He puts forth his unseen hand, and silently changes the heart of all that are truly Christ’s. Have you got the new heart? You never will go to heaven without it. “If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.” Beloved children, pray for these two marks of the sheep of Jesus—forgiveness through blood and a new heart. Oh, be in earnest to get them, and to get them *now*. Soon the Chief Shepherd will come, and set the sheep on his right hand, and the goats on his left. Where will you be in that day?

(3.) *Christ’s sheep all flock together.*—Sheep love to go together. A sheep never goes with a wolf or with a dog, but always with the flock. Especially when a storm is coming down, they keep near one another. When the sky turns dark with clouds, and the first drops of a thunder-shower are coming on, the shepherds say that you will see the sheep flocking down from the hills, and all meeting together in some sheltered valley. They love to keep together. So it is with the flock of Jesus. They do not love to go with the world, but always one with another. Christian loves Christian. They have the same peace, the same Spirit, the same Shepherd, the same fold on the hills of immortality. Especially in the dark and cloudy day, such as our day is likely to be, the sheep of Christ are driven together, to weep together. They love to pray together, to sing praise together, to hide in Christ together.

“Little children, love one another.” Make companions of those that fear God. Flee from all others. Who can take fire into their bosom, and not be burned? I remember of one little boy who was indeed a lamb of Christ’s fold. He could not bear a lie; and whenever he found any of his companions telling a falsehood, he left their company altogether. There was one boy with whom he was very intimate. This boy one day began to boast of something he had done, which boast our little Christian saw at once to be a lie. Upon this he told him that he must never again come to his house, and

that he would have nothing more to do with him till he was a better boy. His mother asked him how he would soon know when he was a better boy. He said that he would see some marks which would show him that he was better. "And what marks will you know it by?" "I think," said he, "the biggest mark will be that he loves God."

II. WHAT JESUS DOES FOR HIS FLOCK

(1.) *He died for them.*—"I am the Good Shepherd: the Good Shepherd giveth his life for the sheep." This is the chief beauty in Christ. The wounds that marred his fair body make Him altogether lovely in a needy sinner's eye. All that are now and ever shall be the sheep of Christ, were once condemned to die. The wrath of God abode upon them. They were ready to drop into the burning lake. Jesus had compassion upon them, left his Father's bosom, emptied himself, became a worm and no man, and died under the sins of many. "While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." This is the grace of the Lord Jesus. Every one in the flock can say, "He loved me, and gave himself for me."

(2.) *He seeks and finds them.*—We would never seek Christ if He did not seek us first. We would never find Christ if He did not find us. "The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." I once asked a shepherd, "How do you find sheep that are lost in the snow?" "Oh," he said, "we go down into the deep ravines, where the sheep go in storms; there we find the sheep huddled together beneath the snow." "And are they able to come out when you take away the snow?" "Oh, no; if they had to take a single step to save their lives, they could not do it. So we just go in and carry them out." Ah, this is the very way Jesus saves lost sheep. He finds us frozen and dead in the deep pit of sin. If we had to take a single step to save our souls, we could not do it; but He reaches down his arm and carries us out. This He does for every sheep He saves. Glory, glory, glory be to Jesus, the Shepherd of our souls. Oh, children, let Jesus gather you. Feel your helpless condition, and look up and say, Lord, help me.

(3.) *He feeds them.*—"By me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out and find pasture." If Jesus has saved you, He will feed you. He will feed your body. "I have been young, and now am old; yet never saw I the righteous for saken, nor his seed begging bread."

The birds without barn or storehouse are fed;
From them let us learn to trust for our bread:
His saints what is fitting shall ne'er be denied,
So long as 'tis written—The Lord will provide.

He will feed your soul. He that feeds the little flower in the cleft of the craggy precipice, where no hand of man can reach it, will feed your soul with silent drops of heavenly dew. I shall never forget the story of a little girl in Belfast, in Ireland. She was at a Sabbath school, and gained a Bible as a prize for her good conduct. It became to her a treasure indeed. *She was fed out of it.* Her parents were wicked. She often read to them, but they became worse and worse. This broke Eliza's heart. She took to her bed and never rose again. She desired to see her teacher. When he came he said, "You are not without a companion, my dear child," taking up her Bible. "No," she replied—

"Precious Bible! what a treasure
Does the word of God afford!
All I want for life or pleasure,
Food and med'cine, shield and sword.
Let the world account me poor,
Having this, I ask no more."

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

III. JESUS CARES FOR LAMBS

"He shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom." Every careful shepherd deals gently with the lambs of the flock. When the flocks are travelling, the lambs are not able to go far; they often grow weary and lie down. Now, a kind shepherd stoops down and puts his gentle arm beneath them, and lays them in his bosom. Such a shepherd is the Lord Jesus, and saved children are his lambs. He gathers them with his arm, and carries them in his bosom. Many a guilty lamb He has gathered and carried

to his Father's house. Some He has gathered out of this place whom you and I once knew well.

Before He came into the world, Jesus cared for lambs. Samuel was a very little child, no bigger than the least of you, when he was converted. He was girded with a linen ephod, and his mother made him a little coat, and brought it to him every year. One night as he slept in the Holy Place, near where the ark of God was kept, he heard a voice cry, "Samuel!" He started up and ran to old Eli, whose eyes were dim, and said, "Here am I, for thou calledst me." And Eli said, "I called not, lie down again." He went and lay down, but a second time the voice cried, "Samuel!" He rose and went to Eli, saying, "Here am I, for thou didst call me." And Eli said, "I called not, my son, lie down again." A third time the holy voice cried, "Samuel!" And he arose and went to Eli with the same words. Then Eli perceived that the Lord had called the child; therefore Eli said, "Go, lie down; and it shall be if He call thee, thou shalt say, Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth!" So he went and lay down. A fourth time (how often Christ will call on little children!) the voice cried, "Samuel! Samuel!" Then Samuel answered, "Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth!" Thus did Jesus gather this lamb with his arm and carried him in his bosom. For "Samuel grew, and the Lord was with him; And the Lord revealed himself to Samuel in Shiloh," 1 Sam. 3.

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

Jesus cares for lambs still. The late Duke of Hamilton had two sons. The eldest fell into consumption, when a boy, which ended in his death. Two ministers went to see him at the family seat, near Glasgow, where he lay. After prayer, the youth took his Bible from under his pillow, and turned up to 2 Tim. 4:7, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness;" and added, "This, sirs, is all my comfort!" When his death approached, he called his younger brother to his bed, and spoke to him with

great affection. He ended with these remarkable words: “And now, Douglas, in a little time you will be a duke, but I *shall be a king*.”

Let me tell you a word of another gentle lamb, whom Jesus gathered, and whom I saw on her way from grace to glory. She was early brought to Christ, and early taken to be with Him where He is. She told her companions that she generally fell asleep on these words, “His left hand is under my head, and his right hand doth embrace me;” and sometimes on these, “Underneath are the everlasting arms.” She said she did not know how it was, but somehow she felt that Christ was always near her. Another time she said, “I think it’s the best way to make myself as loathsome as I can before Him, and then to look to Jesus.” When seized with her last illness, and told that the doctors thought she would not live long, she looked quite composed, and said, “I am very happy at that.” She said she could not love Jesus enough here; that she would like to be with Him, and then she would love Him as she ought. To her tender, watchful relative she said, “I wonder at your often looking so grave. I’m surprised at it, for I think I am the happiest person in the house. I have every temporal comfort, and then I am going to Jesus.” After a companion had been with her, she said, “Margaret quite entered into my happiness; she did not look grave, but smiled; that showed how much she loves me.” When sitting one evening, her head resting on a pillow, she was asked, “Is there anything the matter, my darling?” “Oh,” she said, “I am only weak. I am quite happy. Jesus has said. ‘Thou art mine.’ ” Another day, when near her last, one said to her, “Have you been praying much to-day?” “Yes,” she replied, “and I have been trying to praise too.” “And what have you been praising for?” “I praise God,” she said, “for all the comforts I have. I praise Him for many kind friends,—you know He is the foundation of *all*; and I praise Him for taking a sinner to glory.”

These are a few of the many golden sayings of this lamb of Christ, now, I trust, safe in the fold above. Would you wish to be gathered thus? Go now to some lonely place—kneel down, and call upon the Lord Jesus. Do not leave your knees until you find Him. Pray to be gathered with his arm, and carried in his bosom. Take hold of the hem of his garment, and say, “I must not—I dare not—I will not let Thee go except Thou bless me.”

O seek him in earnest, and seek Him in time,

For they that seek early shall find;

While they that neglect Him are hardened in crime,
And never can come to this pure blessed clime—
They perish in anguish of mind.

DAILY BREAD

BEING A CALENDAR FOR READING THROUGH THE WORD OF GOD IN A YEAR

“Thy word is very pure; therefore thy servant loveth it.”

MY DEAR FLOCK,—The approach of another year stirs up within me new desires for your salvation, and for the growth of those of you who are saved. “God is my record how greatly I long after you all in the bowels of Jesus Christ.” What the coming year is to bring forth, who can tell? There is plainly a weight lying on the spirits of all good men, and a looking for some strange work of judgment coming upon this land. There is need now to ask that solemn question: “If in the land of peace, wherein thou trustedst, they wearied thee, then how wilt thou do in the swelling of Jordan?”

Those believers will stand firmest who have no dependence upon self or upon creatures, but upon Jehovah our Righteousness. We must be driven more to our Bibles, and to the mercy-seat, if we are to stand in the evil day. Then we shall be able to say, like David, “The proud have had me greatly in derision, yet have I not declined from thy law.” “Princes have persecuted me without a cause, but my heart standeth in awe of thy word.”

It has long been in my mind to prepare a scheme of Scripture reading, in which as many as were made willing by God might agree, so that the whole Bible might be read once by you in the year, and all might be feeding in the same portion of the green pasture at the same time.

I am quite aware that such a plan is accompanied with many

DANGERS

(1.) *Formality*.—We are such weak creatures that any regularly returning duty is apt to degenerate into a lifeless form. The tendency of reading the word by a fixed rule may, in some minds, be to create this