

# **"The Good Shepherd"**

*The Present Truth* – March 29, 1894

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"I am the Good Shepherd: the Good Shepherd giveth His life for the sheep." John 10:11.

You cannot live in both light and darkness at the same time. If you choose to have darkness, the light must be shut out.

It is just as impossible to live in both righteousness and sin at the same time. If you choose to live in sin, then righteousness must be shut out; and it is sin that shuts it out.

Since all righteousness is from God, and all sin is from Satan, then, do you not see? when you choose sin you shut yourself away from God, and in with Satan.

The Bible says that sin separates you from God like a "thick cloud," {Isa. 44:22} so that you cannot see His face, and so that He cannot hear you when you call upon Him. Indeed, it is so very thick and so high, and it is so utterly impossible for you to get through it, that in another place God calls it a "wall of partition" between you and Him. {Eph. 2:14}

No wonder, then, that man (and that means all men, and all women, and all children) had "no hope, and was without God in the world" {Eph. 2:12} when, long ago in Eden, sin was chosen in place of righteousness, and Satan's ways in place of God's ways.

We all were as completely lost and shut away from God and the heavenly fold, as a sheep is lost and shut away from its shepherd and its earthly fold when it wanders away among the sharp stones and thorns, and falls bleeding and torn over some steep mountain wall into the ravine below.

What does a shepherd do when one of his sheep wanders off? Does he say, What a silly sheep! It is all its own fault and I'll not trouble myself at all about it; it might have known better? Oh, no, he is not like a hireling that "careth not for the sheep," but he loves his sheep, and knows them all by name, and he cannot rest a moment when one of them is missing. He straightway leaves "the ninety and nine in the wilderness," and no matter how rough the way, or how thorny the path, he goes "after that which is lost, until he find it." {Matt. 18}

"And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders rejoicing," the waywardness of the sheep and the trouble of finding him all forgotten.

"And when he cometh home, he calleth together his friends and neighbours, saying unto them, Rejoice with me; for I found my sheep which was lost."

Now, do you suppose that the righteous God cares less for His children than a poor sinful shepherd does for his sheep? No, no; "He careth" for them; He knows them all by name; the very hairs of their heads are "all numbered;" not one of them falls to the ground without His notice; it is not His will that one of His little ones should perish.

Therefore no sooner had man wandered off and shut himself away with the thick dark wall of sin, than God missed him, and yearned for him, and was willing to leave all of His obedient children, and, "to seek and to save that which was lost." He did not stop to say, It's his own fault, I fully warned him; let him go. He loved him too well for that.

But He would not pick him up and carry him back whether he wanted him to or not, as the shepherd with his sheep, for God had made man to know more than a sheep. He had made him to know what was right, and to be perfectly free to choose between good and evil. All He could do for him, then, was to open up the way through the dark wall of sin, and go where he was, and entreat him to come back with Him. If men would not do that, then he could do no more for him; for a person cannot be forced to feel right and do right, any more than you can be forced to love someone by his whipping you.

No one but God can break down the wall of sin, for He alone has righteousness, and nothing but righteousness can destroy sin.

But righteousness, we are told, is the life of God. Therefore God Himself could not break through the dreadful wall that men had built up without giving His own precious life. His life alone could swallow up sin and death. He alone could lay down His life and take it up again.

And this wonderful Life is just what He did give in the life of His only begotten Son when He died upon the cross, for "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself." {2 Cor. 5:19}

Though we all like sheep had gone astray, and had turned every one to his own way, and were shut away from God and His life by an impassible wall of sin, and were altogether without hope, thanks be to His unspeakable love, He came in Jesus Christ, the Good Shepherd, and gave His life for His sheep, and broke down the wall of sin and opened the way,—a "living way,"—back to the heavenly fold into Himself!

What is the "way"? Jesus says, "I am the way." {John 14:6}

Where is the "door"? Jesus says, "I am the door of the sheep." "By Me if any man enter in he shall be saved." {John 10:9}

No matter, then, how far away from God you have been, no matter how hateful and sinful, through Jesus you can come back to the Father. If you yield up your way and your very self to Him He will lead you gently like a shepherd, back to the fold. He knows the way, and He alone has power to destroy it and take away the naughty sins that shut you away from God. Like the shepherd that has found his sheep, "He will rejoice over thee with joy; . . . He will joy over thee with singing." {Zeph. 3:17}

And He promises that He will one day, "cause the evil beasts to cease out of the land:" and then His people, which are the sheep of His pasture, shall all "dwell safely in the wilderness, and sleep in the woods. . . . and none shall make them afraid." {Ezek. 34:25} And they shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat, which for Jesus shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters.

What a happy time that will be! Do you not want to be among His lambs then? You may be if you now will follow Jesus, the Good Shepherd, every day.

1. Can you live in both light and darkness at the same time?
2. If you choose darkness, what must be shut out?
3. Can you live in both righteousness and sin at the same time?
4. If you choose sin, what must be shut out?
5. Where does all righteousness come from? Matt. 19:17.
6. Where does all sin come from? 1 John 3:8.
7. Then when you choose sin, from whom do you shut yourself away?
8. With whom do you shut yourself in?
9. What is sin like?—"A thick cloud," and "a wall." Isa. 44:22; Eph. 2:12-14.
10. How completely does sin shut us away from God? Isa. 59:1, 2.
11. Then when sin was chosen by man in Eden in place of righteousness, in what condition were we all? Eph. 2:12.
12. Like what had we all gone astray? Isa. 53:6.
13. What does God call us? Ps. 100:3.
14. What does a true shepherd do when one of the sheep wanders off? Luke 15:4-6.
15. Does God care as much for His children as a Shepherd does for his sheep? 1 Peter 5:7; 1 Tim. 2:19; Matt. 10:37; Matt. 18:14.
16. As soon as man wandered off and shut himself away with the wall of sin, what was God ready to do?
17. Did He go and pick him up and carry him back, like the shepherd does his sheep, whether he would or not? Why not?
18. What only could He do for him?
19. Could not someone else open a way through sin for man to get back? Why not?
20. What kind of way did God open? A "living way." Heb. 10:20-22.
21. Who is this "way"? John 14:6.
22. Where is the "door"? John 10:7, 9; Eph. 2:18.
23. Is there no other way to get back to God and be saved? John 14:6; Acts 4:12.
24. Because the Lord gave His life to seek and to save that which was lost, what does He call Himself? John 10:11; Luke 19:10.
25. Is He able to take your sins away and take you back to the Father? Heb. 7:25.

26. What does the shepherd do when he returns with his lost sheep?
27. What will Jesus do if you repent and yield to Him, and let Him take you back to God?  
Zeph. 3:17.
28. What promise does He make to all who will follow Him? Ezek. 34:25, 28; Rev. 7:16, 17.
29. Can you truthfully say with David, "The Lord is my shepherd"? Ps. 23:1.
30. What else was lost when man was lost?—His dominion and everything that he had.
31. Then since Jesus came to seek and to save that which was lost, what else will He save beside man? Micah 4:8.