

most necessary; generally in an eastern encampment the flocks are placed at night in the centre, and the entrance is guarded by a *porter*, ver. 3.

II. The Thieves.

Ver. 1. *Thief and robber*.—Both cunning and violence are implied; both were used against this poor disciple, chap. ix.—*Strangers—hirelings*—were terms all used to point out those who, pretending to guide souls, led or drove them from Christ. *Careth not for the sheep*—no true love for souls; they “seek their own” gratification, love of money, power or self-will. *Entered not by the door*—were not sent by Christ.

III. THE GOOD SHEPHERD.

Ver. 3. The sheep are *his own*—he knows them, and they know him, ver. 14. So the blind man instinctively clung to Christ, and Christ sought and cared for him.

He leads and feeds them—sheep are never found in a wild state, they ever need man's protection, so ver. 4 and 9.

He dies for them, ver. 11. To shield them from danger he interposes his own life—So David did, 1 Sam. xvii. 34. He has *other sheep*—the Gentiles—some on this Isle of the Gentiles. All shall be brought to *one fold*, one church even on earth, one in heaven, safe from every foe. The Father loves the Shepherd because he dies for his sheep, willingly lay down his life. How wondrous the love of the Father and the good Shepherd.

APPLICATION.

The explanation of the parable contains the principles to be employed in the application of it. The latter verses, 15-18, contain truths having no counterpart in the parable.

1. *Christ's sheep*—are you one of them?

1. They were once *lost sheep*—all have wandered. So David, Psalm cxix. 176. They all know this, 1 Cor. vi. 11.

2. They know Christ's voice—it awoke them from carelessness and sin; like Saul, Acts ix. 4; the jailor at Philippi. They hear it in the Bible; it reaches their hearts; they know its loving tone as it calls them by name—so “Mary,” chap. xx. 16.

3. They follow Him—He says still, “follow me,” and they leave all and follow Him, Matt. iv. 19, 20, 22. They not only hear but *obey*, and try to please Christ.

4. They are like sheep for helplessness, proneness to wander, innocence, usefulness, and acceptability to God as sheep were in sacrifice.

5. They are safe—see how Christ sought this poor one, chap. ix. 35; upheld him by his love and power against earth and hell—see Psalm 23.

II. *The wolves*—the enemies of the sheep

1. All who come unsent by Christ—who enter not by the door—like the Pharisees.

2. Who seek their own and not the good of the sheep—hirelings—who scatter and do not gather the flock.

3. Those whose voice Christ's sheep will not hear—so this poor blind man, ver. 27.

4. All who destroy souls—leading or driving from Christ or their duty; stealing their love from Christ as Absalom stole the heart of Israel.

III. *The Good Shepherd*—

1. *Seeks* his sheep—see Matt. xviii. 12; Acts ix. 12. *Guards* the fold safely—so Jacob did, Gen. xxxi. 38, 39. Bethlehem's shepherds, Luke ii. 8. *Feeds them*—ver. 4 and 9. Jacob, Gen. xlviii. 15. The disciples, Luke xxii. 35.

2. Knows and calls each by name—So Christ knew Nathaniel, John i. 47, 48; and Peter, Matt. xvi. 17, 18. Knows them now; He will show he knows them when he separates them from the wicked, Matt. xxv. 32. He knows and calls you.

3. Loves and has died for his sheep—He loved them so that when they or He must die, He laid “down his life” for them. He specially loves and cares for “the lambs,” Isa. xl. 11; John xxi. 15. He will not forget his “other sheep” still ungathered over the world