

A great general said that when he was colonel of a regiment he knew every man of his command by name, but as he rose in command he found it necessary to diminish the scope of his knowledge of individuals, until, when he was at the head of the entire army, he gave little thought to individuals below the rank of a division commander.

Verses 4, 5. A traveler in Syria came to a well where three shepherds were watering their flocks. Presently one of the shepherds rose and called, "Follow me." About thirty of the sheep immediately separated from the others and followed him. The other shepherds called in the same way, and their sheep followed them. The traveler then borrowed the cloak and crook and turban of one of the shepherds and tried to imitate the call, but not a sheep noticed him. He asked, "Do they never follow anyone but you?" "Yes, when they are weak and sickly they will follow anyone; when they are well they will follow no one but their own shepherd."—*Thomson.*

Bad shepherds. We might say that Mohammed was one of them. He led many millions to follow him, and they have been led into anything but a true fold. Then there are those who have followed Buddha, who has misled them, so that to-day they are in spiritual darkness. Strange to say, there are some deluded persons in England and America who have turned to "the light of Asia," and call themselves "Theosophists," and have taken Buddha as their shepherd. Then there are the "agnostics," who would have us believe that there is no Good Shepherd at all. Yes, to-day there are hirelings in abundance.—*Schauffler.*

Jesus the Good Shepherd. The early Christians of Rome buried their dead in underground passages called the catacombs, and on the walls they drew or painted symbols or pictures to show that they were Christians. This was the beginning of Christian art. The picture most often seen there is the picture of the Good Shepherd.

Canon Farrar says: "This helps us to see that the religion of the first Christians was, in one word, the religion of the Good Shepherd. The kindness, the courage, the grace, the love, the beauty of the Good Shepherd was to them, if we may so say, prayer book and articles, creed and canons, all in one. They looked on that figure and it conveyed to them all that they wanted."

One of the pictures is known as "The Good Shepherd and the Seasons." In the center stands the strong, stalwart Shepherd with the lamb upon his shoulder; on either side of the Shepherd are the figures representing the seasons. Spring has roses in bloom, summer has fruits, autumn has ripened ears, while winter as an old man burns the leaves. The meaning is that the Good Shepherd cares for his sheep the year round. He is with them "all the days."

He is represented also as carrying a kid in his arms, and this picture is the subject of Matthew Arnold's poem on the shepherd's love and care for the goats as well as the sheep. This poem has been called the most Christian poem of Matthew Arnold. The theme is really God's love for sinners.

"I lay down my life for the sheep." The good shepherd may or may not be called on to die for his sheep, but he always lays down his life for them. To lay down the life is to consecrate it, devote it to the flock, as a mother, who is always ready to die for her children, but who, living or dying, belongs to her children, and surrenders herself to them. So we ought also to lay down our lives for the brethren, though comparatively few are ever called on to die for them.—*Lyman Abbott.*

Heart Talks on the Lesson.

"I am the good shepherd." It is said this word translated "good" has a fuller meaning than the quality of moral goodness. It includes also the thought of beauty. "I am the beautiful good shepherd."

"See Israel's gentle Shepherd stands
With all-engaging charms."

There is nothing sweeter in all the blessed book than the way the Lord speaks of himself as our shepherd and of us as his sheep. Let us take a stroll together through the pastures of the word and see how the beautiful good Shepherd cares for his flock. The pastures are so wide we can look over only a small part of them now, but it would well repay you to search the whole field of Bible teaching about the relation of Christ to his people illustrated by the shepherd and his flock.

In Isaiah we read how he feeds them in the best places, guiding them by springs of