

herd" that he "goes after that which is lost until he finds it." On thinking of the "lost" we generally picture to ourselves the lonely desert waste, far away from the fold, where the straying sheep lies "Sick and helpless, and ready to die."

But let us to-day picture the fold, safe and peaceful, where the sheep are gathered together under the protecting care of the Shepherd—all but one, whom he misses, and without whom he will not be satisfied. So it was in the "upper room" when the Risen Shepherd appeared with the salutation, "Peace be unto you." What gladness filled the hearts of the disciples when they "saw the Lord!" They had sat there in grief and anguish. Their sorrow was now (as he had promised them, chap. 16. 20) "turned into joy." They had sat there in unrest, agitated and perplexed by their own thoughts and the tidings of the women; now all was peace and satisfaction. They had sat there "with the doors shut, for fear of the Jews;" now all fear left them, dissipated like the mists at sunrise, and we hear no more of "the doors being shut."

But one was outside of all this comfort and peace and gladness. Thomas was "not with them when Jesus came." He had missed the glad meeting, and Jesus noted his absence. His eyes went round the circle, and he missed Thomas, just as a father coming home might miss one of his children who ought to have been there to welcome him. A stranger who knows not the home group would be unconscious that one was absent. Not so the father; not so the shepherd who "knows" his sheep. Chap. 10. 14. And this lost, missing one must be found.

Why was Thomas absent? We are not told. But if we may judge from his subsequent behavior, it was probably his own fault. When he returned to the company of disciples he refused to share in their gladness; he refused to believe; he refused to be comforted. He shut himself out of it all—remained out in the gloom, and the cold, and the solitude, and the wretchedness. Though outwardly in their company, he was spiritually far away. He needed to be sought and found. A whole week of unbelief and wretchedness went by for Thomas; and then again, in the evening, suddenly the Lord appeared. Would Thomas know him then?

*First.* There was the voice: after the first salutation he spoke to Thomas, "He calleth his own sheep by name."

*Second.* There was the call: "Reach hither thy finger," etc. Thomas was not to stay in the background, covering up his thoughts and feelings. He was bidden to come forth, and not only to believe, but to make profession of his faith. "He calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out."

*Third.* There was the visible proof: "Behold my hands . . . my side." Here was the "Good Shepherd" who had laid down his life for his sheep.

All this Thomas saw; but he saw more yet. An earthly shepherd may give his life for his

sheep, but that is all. He can do no more. He cannot rise from the grave again to seek and tend them. Again, an earthly shepherd has literally to search for his lost sheep. He knows not where it is until, by patient searching, he comes upon its hiding-place. Not so had the Lord Jesus searched for Thomas. He knew all about him—just where he was, what he thought, how he felt—saw into his inmost soul and fathomed it all. In the Risen One Thomas recognized not merely his "Lord"—the "Good Shepherd" whom he had known in this mortal flesh—but the "Great Shepherd," Jehovah, the Mighty One, his God—"My Lord and my God!"

This is our lesson to-day—Jesus as the Great Shepherd, pre-eminent in love, in power and majesty. For those inside his fold there is gladness, rest, and safety. But when he looks round on his sheep he misses many a lost one, wandering outside. Are there any in the class whom he thus misses?

But though he misses them from his fold, he knows where they are; where they have strayed; sees every step they take; looks into the depth of each heart; knows that this one is led away by pleasure or by worldly advantage, that that one is kept outside by the fear of his companions; knows who is looking wistfully toward the door and wishing he were inside, yet somehow keeping at a distance. Not one in the class but he knows all about him—knows and cares too.

But may any one expect such a sight as Thomas had? What did the Lord say to him on his profession of faith? "Because thou hast seen me thou hast believed; blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed."<sup>1</sup> No vision now for the bodily eye. "Blessed are they that have not seen."

The sight Thomas saw with his bodily eye soon passed away. The Risen Lord returned to heaven, and as Man he sits on the right hand of the Father. But there is a sight, that does not pass away, to be had now. Look at Hebrews 11. 27; 2 Cor. 4. 6.

### Berean Methods.

#### Hints for the Teachers' Meeting and the Class.

State and explain the circumstances of the first five appearances of Jesus. . . . It might be well to draw a rough map of Jerusalem, showing the place of the sepulcher, the supper-room on Mount Zion, and the road to Emmaus, and then to indicate at each place the numbers corresponding to the appearances there. . . . Show the traits manifested by Jesus at these several appearances, as knowledge, love, interest in individuals, omniscience, etc. . . . In the Analytical and Biblical Outline is presented a line of teaching on the subject of the privileges of faith in a risen Christ, as shown in this lesson. Show how we may enjoy the same privileges, taking as a lesson-thought, "Blessed are they that have not seen, yet have believed." . . . In the Thoughts for Young People, Thomas is made the central figure. Study his character, as shown in all the events with which he is named, and notice the lessons here given concerning doubt and inquiry. This is an important