

He does is far more than any of the best of Eastern shepherds could have done for their flocks. He was not content to watch over His sheep from a distance, but He came down from heaven to be their guardian and keeper, to shield them from harm, and to see that no enemy came near to terrify or molest them.

He expended all His solicitude upon them, i.e., upon us, for it is we who are the sheep of His pasture. He came and spent His whole life with us; and not only spent His life with us, but spent it for us, supplying all our wants and offering us the certain security of His constant protection.

Ever forgetful of Himself, and studying the welfare of His sheep, His life upon earth was one continual service of pastoral care and fatherly solicitude.

He allowed Himself no respite when the misery of men was to be alleviated; never did He suffer bodily fatigue to interfere with His work of mercy; never did He weight the refusals He met with, and never did He measure His benevolence by the ingratitude of those He came to rescue.

When mankind was sleeping in the oblivion of their own misery, the Good Shepherd was occupied in prayerful converse with His heavenly Father, touching the ardent desire of His heart that of all those whom the Father had given Him not a single soul should perish, but that He might raise it up with Himself at the last.

To saintly souls like the Apostles, whom His grace had drawn close to Himself, He vouchsafed a foretaste of heavenly joy in the happiness of intimate